



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

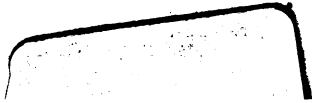


her  
131

wh  
7/6



Finch U 200











A  
V I E W

OF

E N G L A N D.



A  
V I E W  
O F  
E N G L A N D  
TOWARDS THE  
CLOSE of the EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

BY  
FRED. AUG. WENDEBORN, LL.D.

Translated from the Original GERMAN, by the  
AUTHOR himself.

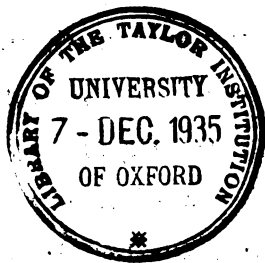
IN TWO VOLUMES.

V O L. I.

SPEAK OF ME AS I AM.      Shakef. Othello.

L O N D O N,  
Printed for G. G. J. and J. ROBINSON, Pater-noster-Row.

MDCCXCI.



---

## P R E F A C E.

**T**HE original of this work made its appearance in Germany about five years ago ; it was much read upon the continent, and has been translated into other languages ; but the author had not the most distant idea of its ever being translated into English. He wrote merely for the instruction of his own countrymen ; and his intention, as he then expressed himself in his German Preface, was, that of making them better acquainted with one of the principal, if not at present, the first nation on the globe. The Monthly

Review, however, so deservedly esteemed for communicating literary intelligence, and for exhibiting the modern state of literature, not only in Great Britain but also that of foreign countries, took notice of this German publication \*; and the author soon afterwards received information, that more than one English translation, by different persons, was about to be undertaken. He had reason to apprehend, that these translators might not do that justice to the original, which he would naturally wish for; and, therefore, in his own defence, and contrary to his inclination, he undertook the translation himself, and announced

\* Vol. LXXVII. p. 229, &c. and vol. LXXVIII. p. 568, &c.



# P R E F A C E.      vii

it to the public. It now makes its appearance before the English reader, who, whilst he peruses these volumes, is earnestly intreated to keep always in mind, that the author is a foreigner, who wrote it with no other view than that of instructing his own countrymen. Many things, therefore, in the original, must appear uninteresting to a well-informed Englishman; and for this reason, fundry passages, relative to matters which are sufficiently known in this country, are omitted in the translation. Indeed, some whole chapters have been left out, as entirely useless to an English reader; such, for instance, as that which contains Instructions to Foreigners, who, for the first time, arrive in England. In truth, abridging the

viii P R E F A C E.

original, here and there, was absolutely necessary to prevent a work, which might be instructive and entertaining to Germans, from becoming tedious to the better informed of this country.

It may, perhaps, be presumed, from the long residence of the author in England, and from the acquaintance and connexions which he has been able to form, that he was not altogether unqualified to write upon what he has chosen as the subject of this work. He came over from his own country to this at the age of hardly five and twenty, and for nearly two and twenty years, he has been, in this great metropolis, the minister of a German congregation, who erected a chapel for him on purpose. At  
the

P R E F A C E. ix

the beginning of the present year, he executed a resolution, which he had formed some years ago, of resigning his place as minister, that he might conclude the remainder of his days in a philosophical independence, and a literary retirement, in any country that should be most agreeable to him. Thus situated, and having obtained the utmost of his wishes, that of being at his own disposal, he has the satisfaction to say, that he is not, nor ever has been, under an obligation to any body, for any pension whatever, or any place of emolument, in which he had either a predecessor or a successor. He is far from mentioning this from any motives of vanity, but merely to declare, that he has no ties which could prevent him from speaking

ing

## P R E F A C E.

ing his mind freely, like an honest man, and that he had no inducements, by which he could be biassed to sacrifice what he thought to be truth, from any particular expectations, or from any motives of hope or of fear.

Many of the accounts that are published relative to this celebrated island, and its inhabitants, particularly those written by foreigners, who hardly understood the English language, are very vague, and too frequently the result of hasty and superficial observation. Much of what they advance is sometimes carelessly transcribed from others, and more calculated to mislead, than to give such information as is founded upon fact.

The

P R E F A C E. xi

The author of these volumes has kept, as much as was in his power, the motto, which he has prefixed to his title-page, constantly in his mind ; and has endeavoured to confine himself, as far as human imperfection will permit, strictly within the boundaries of truth and impartiality ; and to advance nothing but what he derived either from his own observation and experience, or from the testimony of persons of credit and veracity. He is, indeed, confident, that the work itself contains internal evidence of his having conscientiously adhered to the just precept, SPEAK OF ME AS I AM. After having spent the best part of his life among this nation, he is convinced that the number of intel-

telligent and candid persons which it contains, is so great, that he cheerfully submits what he has written to their impartial judgment, and is not apprehensive that they will pronounce against him an unfavourable verdict. He is, however, neither so unacquainted with the differences of opinion among mankind, or with the impossibility of pleasing all parties, as not to be aware, that his impartiality, in some instances, may be liable to suspicion; nor is he so weak as to suppose, that his work can be wholly free from errors : but he has learned, in the course of his life, to submit with resignation to the former; and he can produce more than one instance, wherein he has, most readily,

ly,

ly, acknowledged and retracted the latter, on being convinced of them by reason, and with candour.

Should it be said, that several things which he has related, and some observations which he has advanced, are not altogether flattering, he conceives that no apology for them can be necessary, if they are well founded. It was the intention of the author to present a view of England to his own countrymen, for whose information he wrote, which was drawn on the spot from Nature; and though there appear, here and there, some shades in the picture, which none can be without, yet he is sure that the whole, compared with views of other countries, is pleasing and brilliant. Those on the continent, whose notions of

xiv P R E F A C E.

this justly respected island, and its inhabitants, have been elevated too highly by unfaithful and romantic descriptions, may, on perusing this work, reduce their ideas more nearly to the standard of truth; but they will find, notwithstanding, sufficient reason to excite their admiration, without calling in the aid either of romance or of exaggeration.

London, Nov. 16, 1790.

CON-



# C O N T E N T S

O F T H E

## F I R S T V O L U M E.

<b>O</b> <i>N the English Constitution,</i>	<b>Page 1</b>
<i>On the English Laws, Courts of Judicature,</i> <i>and the Manner of administering Justice,</i>	<b>54</b>
<i>On the Army and Navy,</i>	<b>85</b>
<i>On the National Debt and Taxes,</i>	<b>96</b>
<i>On the Provision for the Poor,</i>	<b>113</b>
<i>On the State of Population in England,</i>	<b>124</b>
<i>Commerce,</i>	<b>136</b>
<i>Manufactures,</i>	<b>222</b>
<i>London,</i>	<b>252</b>
<i>On the Character of the English,</i>	<b>356</b>



\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**VOL. I.**

## 2 THE ENGLISH

having transgressed the law, be guilty, or not. The executive power of the king can be exerted only in conformity to their verdict. Hence it may easily be seen, that the liberty of the English consists in their being their own lawgivers, by means of parliaments, and in being tried by their equals, when accused of having transgressed the laws; for no punishment can be inflicted till a jury, upon oath, after a fair trial, have determined the guilt of the party accused.

The English themselves consider the following as the great bulwarks of their liberty; first, the Magna Charta, when king John, in 1215, was obliged, by his barons, to grant great privileges to them, and to the people, and which were afterwards considerably extended; secondly, the right of being tried by a jury, or, if the person to be tried be a peer or peers, by the house of lords; and, lastly, the Habeas Corpus act, which was made in 1679, though the constitution implies the tenor of it centuries ago. By this act any prisoner can demand, immediately after his imprisonment, to be brought before a judge in open court, and have the cause of his detainer and imprisonment certified; to be indicted the first term after his commitment,  
and

and to be brought to trial at least the term following. This act is of the highest importance; for it places the person of a British subject in the greatest security. In times of rebellion, or if the state be in great danger, it is occasionally suspended, and the king may secure suspicious persons, without delay, and without the customary forms of law; but this is very seldom done, and when the parliament grants such a power to the king, it is only for a short and limited time<sup>1</sup>.

The principles, and the origin of the English constitution, are derived from the Saxon government; and Montesquieu observes very justly, that this noble system of government was found in the woods of Germany<sup>2</sup>. It does great credit, indeed, to the English, that they have preserved this system of government of their ancestors, and carried it to a much greater degree of perfection; whilst the Germans, on the contrary, have lost both the system, and the liberty of their forefathers. Animated by a proper spirit, we might full as

<sup>1</sup> Here follows, in the German edition, an account of the fundamental laws, which, being well known in this country, is here omitted.

<sup>2</sup> Ce beau système a été trouvé dans les bois. *L'Esprit des Loix*, tom. I. liv. xi. c. 6. p. 276.

well have applied to our German nation the ancient doctrine of the English common law, "That liberty is the birthright of the people of England:"—and why not of all mankind, over the whole globe? We are, however, to remember, that this British constitution, as it at present subsists, is not many centuries old, and that it has cost much bloodshed, and occasioned many struggles between the people and their kings, before it was properly established. The æra when it obtained the present degree of some human perfection, is to be dated only from the Revolution in the last century. I shall offer a few remarks on this constitution, after I have previously said something more respecting its three constituent parts, the King, the Lords, and the Commons.

THE

## CONSTITUTION. §

### THE KING.

THE royal dignity is hereditary, and may descend to females, on a failure of male issue. This right of inheritance has repeatedly, by act of parliament, been changed or limited; but, without such intervention of parliament, the crown is to remain hereditary.

The coronation oath shews under what obligations and restrictions a British sovereign is to lay himself. But though the royal power seems to be pretty limited, it yet remains very great. Let every one judge from the following particulars. The person of the king is to be esteemed sacred. The laws do not extend over his actions; and, therefore, it is supposed, that the king can do no wrong, nor even think, or intend any evil. His ministers are responsible for every thing that may be contrary to law, or to the constitution, even when they are suspected to have acted as they were ordered by their sovereign. For this reason, in political publications written in opposition to measures adopted by the government, not the king, but his ministers are to be attacked. Even in parliamentary debates, where the liberty of speech is otherwise so great, the name

## 6 THE ENGLISH

of the king is to be held sacred, and never to be mentioned without high respect. The opposition party may direct their speeches and censures against the ministers, but never against the king himself, even when they may, perhaps, suppose, that the ministers have only conformed to higher commands. Should any expressions disrespectful to the sovereign be dropped in either house of parliament, the members who make use of them are liable to be sent to the Tower; but this can only be done by the authority of that house of parliament in which the expressions are used; and no instance of that kind has occurred during the present reign. It is, however, from hence manifest, how tenderly the name of the king is to be made use of in both houses of parliament. The king has the exclusive right to declare war, and make peace, to conclude alliances, and to send ambassadors to foreign courts, as he pleases. He is the head of the church, and the highest and most lucrative ecclesiastical preferments are in his gift. The appointment of officers, both in the navy and the army, is a prerogative of the king. He can call parliaments, and dissolve them again, when he thinks proper. He can give his royal assent to bills brought into parliament,  
that



that they may become standing laws, or he may refuse it, and they are consequently lost.

The annual revenue of the king is at present fixed at 900,000*l.* a most considerable sum; but which, notwithstanding, has not always been found sufficient; and, therefore, parliament has granted, even during my stay in England, more than once, large sums, which sometimes have amounted to half a million, to pay the king's debts. There is no comparison between the revenue of the kings of England in former times and that at present, even though we make allowance for the greater intrinsic value of money formerly. In the time of Henry V. the ordinary revenue of the crown amounted only to 55,714*l.* out of which the ordinary expences of the government were to be defrayed; which at that time amounted to about 42,507*l.* so that the king had a surplus of only 13,207*l.* At present, the sum above-mentioned, which goes under the name of the civil list, is chiefly appropriated to the current expences of the king and his household. The general expences, which are otherwise requisite to the national government, are yearly granted and raised by parliament besides; and are computed to amount in times of peace to about four millions. There is no nation in Europe

which raises such great sums for government, and which has provided so amply and liberally for the support of their princes as the English. Notwithstanding which, it is an observation frequently made by foreigners who come to this island, that there is hardly any court in Europe which is kept up with so little splendour as the British, which gives less encouragement to the arts and sciences, and where those who belong to the king's household complain oftener of being in arrears with regard to their salaries. I shall only add, that, in modern times, the civil list is generally granted to the king during his life-time, though the English law maintains, that an English king never dies; but these trifling contradictions in human assertions are not to be regarded. At the time of the Revolution, the civil list was granted by parliament to king William, first for one year only, afterwards for five years, and then for his life-time.

That part of the king's revenue which goes under the name of the civil list, is, however, not the whole which the crown possesses in relation to money. All that is raised in the nation, under the name of taxes, of duties, of excise, &c. is delivered into the treasury, and the king's exchequer, whence the different sums  
are

## CONSTITUTION. 9

are issued, according to the grants of parliament, for the different exigencies of the state. The persons, who are employed in such offices as concern the finances of the kingdom, are nominated by the king, or by those who, in consequence of the royal appointment, acquire the right of appointing those who serve under them. By these means the crown can make powerful friends and dependents; and the great patronage, which both in church and state, is in the hands of the king, renders the influence of the crown very great. A few years ago, when those who are stiled patriots got the upper hand in parliament, they went so far as to vote, that the influence of the crown had increased, was increasing, and ought to be diminished. Nay, an inquiry was even set on foot into the manner in which the money raised for the civil list, was expended; and one or two acts of parliament were passed for lessening the influence of the crown. This, indeed, was an exertion, which shewed for once the rights of the people, and that it was supposed, by the constitution, that the prerogatives of the king were derived from the nation, who had conferred them on their sovereign. But means were soon found to extinguish these sparks of patriotism, lest they should  
kindle

kindle into a flame. This very transaction, and the result, has confirmed me in my opinion, that the influence and the power of the crown are very great.

When in England private persons go to law, he that loses is frequently obliged to pay all costs; but the king in his law-suits, though he loses, never pays any. If a person becomes a bankrupt, and owes any thing to the crown, that sum is previously taken from the whole of the bankrupt's effects, and what afterwards remains is divided among the creditors. If the collector of the land-tax in a parish should become insolvent, or prove to be a knave, the inhabitants of the parish are to pay taxes a second time, to make good the deficiency of what is due to the king. If any person has in point of property a just demand upon the king, he must petition him in his court of chancery, where the chancellor will administer right *as a matter of grace, though not upon compulsion*<sup>3</sup>. In this respect I might almost say, that the Germans, whom many of the English

<sup>3</sup> It has, however, been remarked, that this is a mere matter of verbal compliment to the king, in the proceedings of the court of chancery; and that neither the chancellor, nor the king, can refuse or prevent justice from being administered in such cases.

## CONSTITUTION. 11

regard as slaves, possess more freedom ; for they have a tribunal, where they can oblige their princes to render them justice, without its being regarded as a mere matter of grace <sup>4</sup>. I am, however, convinced, that, in the present times, in England, justice will never be denied any subject, if he has a just demand even upon the king ; though there are instances enough in English history, where this could not be obtained. All these prerogatives are sufficient to shew, that the power of the king, and his political influence, are very great ; and that there is some truth in what the emperor Charles V. asserted, in a conversation with the English ministers at Brussels, *that the prerogatives of a king of England were more extensive than those of a king of France* ; at least it will be certainly so, if the revolution in France, which has just taken place, should be finally established.

<sup>4</sup> Among other instances of this kind, I will only mention a process, which the city of Leipzig carried on at Wezlar against the late king of Prussia, who had erected a turnpike, and instituted a toll, on the high road leading to Leipzig. Frederic, who is styled the Great, lost his suit ; and was obliged, though unwillingly, to remove the turnpike, and drop the toll.

## THE NOBILITY.

THE British nation is divided into Lords and Commons ; and upon this distinction are founded the two Houses of Parliament, or the House of Lords, and the House of Commons. The clergy, according to the English constitution, belong to the commons ; and the bishops sit in the house of lords, not as representatives of the clergy, but as barons of the realm. The number of the house of lords is not limited. At the close of the reign of Charles II. there were only 178 peers ; but they have since been increased to 216. When, in the year 1719, a bill was brought into parliament for limiting the number of peers of the realm, and vigorously supported by the earl of Sunderland, it passed the house of lords, but was rejected by the house of commons ; because many members of the lower house would not be deprived of the hope of being made peers themselves. The privileges of a lord are great ; and the house of peers is the highest tribunal in the kingdom. From all the courts of justice appeals may be made to the house of lords, and their decision is final.

The

## CONSTITUTION. 13

The English nobility, as I before observed, are numerous, and in general rich. Their riches, however, and their splendor, are more visible at their country seats than in London; though they spend the greater part of their revenues in the metropolis, from the month of November to that of June. The English nobility might be the happiest of human creatures, if they would; but I fear there are too many of them who do not enjoy that happiness, which they might derive from their independency, and their large incomes, in consequence of their ambition, and their too expensive living. They seem to wish for nothing so much as places at court, and lucrative employments under government. The style of life of many of them is such, that even their large incomes are not sufficient for their extravagant expences. Hence it arises, that some, who, by pursuing the dictates of good sense, and by prudent management, might be the freest and most independent amongst men, are burthened with debts, cringe at court, and are unmindful of their own dignity, and of the welfare of their country. For this reason those of the nobility who are Roman Catholics, appear to me to be more happy; for being excluded from places under government, and from sitting in parliament, they

## 14 THE ENGLISH

they can live more to themselves, and have more real enjoyment of their fortunes.

The English nobility are called the guardians and the pillars of the throne; and I sincerely believe, that they may be justly so considered. Though there are degrees of nobility, and they are ranked accordingly; yet I have not found that there subsists such a ridiculous pride among the British nobles, on account of the number of noble ancestors which make up their pedigree, as may be met with almost every where in Germany; nor does an English nobleman think himself, or his posterity, in the least degraded, by marrying a lady who is not of a noble extraction. This would be looked upon among our German nobility as a great degradation, by which the most noble blood would be for ever defiled and corrupted; though it is to be feared, that there are many, who pride themselves upon their noble ancestors, whose real fathers or grandfathers were very different persons from their pretended progenitors; a circumstance which is too common in all Christian countries.

The privileges of the English nobility are great and numerous. There is amongst others, a law known under the name of *scandalum magnatum*; by which the character of a peer is



## CONSTITUTION. 15

to be secured against calumny and defamation. But whoever peruses the daily papers of the present times may naturally suspect the existence of such a law'; for most of them treat the characters of many noblemen very cavalierly. Sometimes, indeed, even facts and truth, when related, may have the appearance of scandal.

The crown has always found it advantageous to have the richest and most respected of her subjects on her side, and to be in a close union with them. Honours and titles are the means to obtain this end. The rich man, who might live independently, is easily blinded by these things. He becomes connected with the court, and supports its measures, oftentimes from motives of vanity, and oftentimes from self-interest and necessity, because his expences become greater, and lead him to wish for a participation of those good things, of which government has the disposal.

It reflects no small honour upon the English nobility, that so many among them have distinguished themselves as men of science and li-

terature,  
s It would not, in the present age, I am informed, be considered as very honourable in any nobleman to ground a prosecution upon this statute; nor do even the courts of law much countenance such exclusive privileges.

terature, as authors, and friends to the Muses. The names of a Bacon, Shaftesbury, Bolingbroke, Burlington, Pembroke, Orrery, Lyttelton, Pomfret, Chesterfield, and others, are well known in the republic of letters, and of arts. But the times seem to be altered: both learning, and the patronage of the learned, appear to be in a decline among the present nobility. Their education is, perhaps, in modern times more expensive, since travelling is now more frequent than formerly; but, notwithstanding this, men of genius, and of shining talents, are scarce. Much attention is paid to external accomplishments; but the internal furniture of the head, and the ornaments of the heart, are not sufficiently regarded. Much time and money are expended in dress, public exhibitions, plays, masquerades, hunting, racing, and gratifying sensual pleasures; but the number of those truly noble lords, who do honour to themselves, and to their rank, by promoting the welfare of their country, and encouraging and patronizing arts and sciences, is by far the smallest. Yet, even at present, I could mention respectable names of noblemen, still living, who do honour to their country, and to their elevated station.

The

The nobility on the continent are known to be possessed, in general, of great pride; and in England, here and there, something of a similar kind may be likewise observed; but, certainly, in no respect comparable to what is to be met with in some other countries. I have made an observation, which, though it may appear a little paradoxical, is, I believe, nevertheless true. In kingdoms, and principalities on the continent, the nobility which are to be met with at their respective courts, are, to outward appearance, more condescending, and more polite and easy in their conversation, than those who live on their estates in the country, at a distance from the metropolis and the court. In England, the reverse seems to prevail. Those who are in possession of lucrative places under government, or who are called the *Ins*, are rather, *pro tempore*, haughty; and some of them resemble those petty tyrants, who are not much liked in other countries. On the contrary, those who are not, or at least but little, connected with the court, appear affable and civil; and almost to forget, that, by the regulations of society, which, in such cases depend on the chance of birth, they are placed in a higher degree above those who are presumed to be their inferiors.

It is well known, that the English nobility have divested themselves, long ago, of a prejudice under which, in many other countries, their equals still labour. Here it is in no respect looked upon as degrading, when the younger sons of noblemen support and enrich themselves by traffic; which laudable way of thinking would, perhaps, be adopted more on the continent, if, after the example of the English, not all the children of a nobleman, but only his eldest son, were to inherit, and bear the title. At the royal exchange in London, a man may, perhaps, conclude a bargain with a merchant, without knowing that he is a near relation, or even the brother of a lord, because he bears only the name of the family. Many marquisses, counts, and barons, in other countries, might be infinitely more happy and useful than they are, if they copied after the wise example of the English, and engaged in trade, or in some profession, that they might live without anxiety; and without verifying what Juvenal says, that it is one of the greatest hardships of poverty to make those ridiculous who labour under it:

*Nil habet infelix paupertas durius in se,  
Quam quod ridiculos homines facit.*

JUV. Sat. iii, v. 152.

... This

## CONSTITUTION. 19

This is frequently the case in other countries, but not in England. I remember, among other instances, that, a few years ago, a man, who got his livelihood by plying a ferry-boat, between Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight, became unexpectedly an Irish peer, because death had made some havock in his family.

THE PEOPLE AND THE HOUSE  
OF COMMONS.

ALL the inhabitants of the realm, the king and the peers excepted, are styled *commons*, and generally divided into two classes, *gentry* and *commonalty*. In the first class are reckoned, those who rank between the nobility and the middling and lower class of the people. Barons, knights, esquires, and gentlemen, go under the denomination of *gentry*. The clergy are looked upon as a distinct class. Barons and knights may be compared with what is called lower nobility in other countries, though the title of a knight bachelor seems to be in but small repute. Formerly it was a military honour and reward; but at present it is bestowed on people of different professions: and if the city of London presents an address to the king to congratulate him on any occasion, the citizens that present it are asked, if there are any among them who wish to be knighted? It then frequently happens, that people of no significance, whose wives wished to be called, My Lady, acquire the honour of knighthood. The title of esquire belongs properly to the younger sons of noblemen, and to people

## C O N S T I T U T I O N . 21

people of genteel extraction, who live upon an ample fortune ; but at présent this appellation is very much degraded. I have seen it in English newspapers bestowed upon notorious sharpers, and even pickpockets. The appellation of *gentlemen* should be given only to those who have enjoyed a liberal education, and make good use of it, at the same time that their dress excites a favourable idea, and their outside corresponds with their inside. However, this title is likewise much misused ; for it is given to, and assumed by people who, have, neither by education, nor conduct, the least claim to it. Even a parcel of cobblers and botchers, when they meet, will address the company with the appellation of Gentlemen, as two washerwomen will call one another Madam.

It is said, that in England are to be found about 10,000, who, under no other title than the appellation of Gentlemen, enjoy from 500l. to 5000l. sterling yearly incomes, derived from their estates, or personal fortunes. To these are to be added at least 20,000 of younger brothers, and sons of the nobility, and what are called people of quality. They are generally brought up as if they were possessed of great fortunes, though in reality they have

but very little to expect. To supply, therefore, the want of personal fortune, they must endeavour, either by their real merit, or, which is much oftener the case, by means of their relations, to get lucrative places under government, either in the army, navy, church, or otherwise. Some of the English consider this kind of gentry as the bane of the country, though I believe there are many exceptions to be made. They say, that they are ready to do any thing for money, places, and pensions; and that their dependence on government renders them dangerous enemies to the liberty of the people. Bishop Burnet expresses himself still more strongly. "They are," says he, "for the most part, the worst instructed and the least knowing of any of their rank, I ever went amongst." Of those that are educated in the English universities, he asserts, that "they are rather disposed to love arbitrary government, and to become slaves to absolute monarchy;"—and that "they are easily brought to like slavery, if they may be the tools for managing it." I am, however, of opinion, that this description of Burnet's is more suited to former times, and that the present have rather altered for the better. Yet it

<sup>6</sup> Hist. of his Own Times, vol. ii. p. 648.



is very natural, and it is confirmed by daily experience, that those who are educated as if they were high in rank, though without sufficient fortune to support it afterwards, being initiated in early youth in all fashionable follies, and having themselves indulged in all sorts of excesses, will try every means to support the same kind of life. They will readily adopt any method which promises money to carry on their manner of living, as it is called, in style, in idleness and pursuit of pleasure. Besides, those who fall under this description of gentry, seldom think it to be a concern of theirs, to live within their income. They generally go beyond it, and are either involved in debts, or use every means, however abject, to procure a place under government, a sinecure, or a pension, that they may live upon the industry and the taxes of their fellow-citizens. The commonalty is, generally speaking, the better part of the nation; and it is, if not folly, at least great pity, that they are not always valued by those who think themselves their betters, according to their merit with regard to the public in general; nay, that many, who belong to this useful class of the nation, look upon their situation as degrading, and aspire to appear, at least outwardly, as if they belonged

to a higher class of the community. This, however, is a kind of weakness, which is to be met with in all countries; though it is a pity that it should infect the English commonalty, which is superlatively happy, when compared with the greatest part of those in Europe who are in rank their equals.

The lower house of parliament, representing the commons of Great Britain, has thence taken its denomination. It consists of 558 members. To enquire into the state of the nation, to deliberate about the means of promoting public welfare, to remove national grievances, and to grant the necessary supplies, that are to be raised for the support of government and the state, are the principal objects to which the attention of the parliament is directed. They are very great; and those who have read English history with attention, will know how much, particularly in later times, this grand council of the nation has contributed to support liberty, and to advance the prosperity of the British dominions<sup>7</sup>.

When any bills have passed both houses of parliament, the king gives his assent, upon

<sup>7</sup> Here follows, in the German, an account how the public business is transacted in parliament, which being well known to Englishmen, is not here translated.

which

which they become law, and are called *acts*, or *statutes*. This royal assent is given in old Norman French, as it was done in the times of William the Conqueror. I have often wondered how the British spirit can brook, that these monuments of former subjection and conquest should still remain; but customs are in many instances kept up and authorized, though there are good reasons for abolishing them. A foreigner will also wonder, that these laws, and these parliamentary and royal mandates, when they concern the whole community, are not, as in other countries, made publicly known, either by being read on Sundays in churches, or posted up in public places, that every one may be informed of the law which is enacted. When I have mentioned this to Englishmen, I received for answer, that it was supposed the whole nation was present in the persons of their representatives, when these laws were made in parliament, and therefore became immediately acquainted with them. This is a kind of imputed knowledge, like that of the imputed sin of the first man, which divines have called original, Adam being supposed to have been the representative of all mankind. Of these statutes, or acts of parliament, there are so great a number, that they fill more than twelve  
quarto

quarto volumes. I have been told, that some of these statutes contradict each other; and my own experience has taught me, that a great many are not at all, or at least very little observed. If laws, enacted by these statutes, are to be repealed, they are to go back through all the same formalities, which attended their coming into existence. The manner in which the laws of England are promulgated, as well as the laws themselves, seems to stand in great need of reformation.

I have often felt the greatest pleasure, when I had an opportunity of attending debates of some consequence in parliament; and it is my firm opinion, that if, in modern times, in any country eloquence can be exhibited as it was among the Greeks and Romans in their better days, it is in the British senate. I have sometimes heard, in both houses, speeches which would by no means have disgraced a Demosthenes or a Cicero, great as those names are. Formerly, the liberty of speech in parliament was very much confined, and that which now prevails is to be dated from the time of James the First. Every member, at present, expresses his sentiments with the utmost freedom; and the spirit of the old Romans, in those days of liberty, seems particularly now and then to

re-

re-appear in the house of commons. It must give pleasure to a feeling and enlightened mind, to hear the noblest language of patriotism, and see in what striking colours the interest of the court, and the liberties of the people are caricatured ; but, when after long rhetorical exertions, the cry is, the question ! the question ! an uninformed stranger, whose passions have been worked upon by the speeches he heard, and who tacitly felt an interest in the event of the debate, will find to his great surprize, that the whole contest is too often no more than a matter of form, and a kind of mock battle between the ministerial party and those that are in the opposition, of which the issue in most instances very easily might be foretold before the house assembled. The annual sessions of parliament might be much shortened, if some speakers, particularly those in the opposition, would abridge their speeches, especially when they know beforehand that they will be of no effect. A foreign gentleman, who understood English pretty well, came out of the house of commons, much fatigued, because the debates had lasted till late at night. When I saw him on the next day, and asked him how he had been entertained, his answer was, " If the words of Scripture are to be understood literally ;

“terally; and that *of every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account in the day of judgment*, I will endeavour to get behind the British parliament; and I shall be sure that an eternity will be required before my account can be called for.”

In the upper house, those lords who are absent may give their votes, after a debate, by proxy. If to foreigners it should appear strange, that votes are given without hearing what has been urged for or against the question, they ought to consider, that the minister gains by this way of voting, because a third part of the votes are sometimes given in this manner. If, in the Roman senate, they likewise had voted by proxy, it might, indeed be asked, of what use could have been the eloquence of a Cicero, or of any other orator?

## REMARKS

REMARKS ON THE BRITISH  
CONSTITUTION.

FORMS of government are, in the social state of men, a necessary evil. We cannot do without them, on account of the ambitious, the wicked, the foolish members of society. I for my part should declare myself for a monarchical government, if the chiefs of nations were always wise men and friends to mankind. The objections against an aristocracy, are many and too strong to be refuted. As for republican government, which seems to be so favourable to inestimable liberty, it is much to be lamented, that the history of old and modern republics shews too plainly, how much even this form of government suffers by ambition, selfishness, ignorance, and folly. Man, considered in a state of nature, revolts against all restrictions of his liberty : it, therefore, will always remain a problem to find out a form of government, which is adapted to that natural liberty of man, and to that society in general, in which he lives, in such a manner as to answer in every respect, when it is put into practice. Till then, we must pronounce every sort of government a good one, which, when well administered

administered, promotes the happiness of those who live under it.

Since, however, all the three before mentioned kinds of government are imperfect, it is not easily to be conceived, that a fourth, which is a compound of three imperfections, should become a perfection. This is applicable to the British constitution. It is a medley, a composition of monarchical, aristocratical, and republican materials; and though it has been looked upon, particularly by the English themselves, as a masterpiece of human wisdom, yet many visible defects may be discovered in it. I very readily pronounce the British constitution, when compared with other governments, a very excellent one; but it appears to me that the new constitution, which is just introduced into the united American provinces, is free from many defects which may be found in the English, and has advantages which the latter has not. However, since that new one has not yet been sufficiently tried, and its preference has not been stamped with an experience of many years, it must be left to time to decide whether the British or the American constitution is superior.

Political contests, which have been almost perpetual, and parties which seem to be per-



manent, have kept the nation continually in a kind of ferment; and the revolutions which have happened, seem to be a sufficient proof, that the English constitution, which is composed of such jarring elements, must contain within itself the causes of its destruction. The English history, of former and modern times, furnishes proofs sufficient, that the nation was never without complaints of its constitution being violated; though the true spirit of this constitution, and the rights of the people which it contains, were never properly understood before the times of James the First; nay, I may say, only since the reign of Charles the Second. Before I became somewhat acquainted with the political affairs of England, and how they are transacted, I used to think, that if the maxims of the constitution were strictly adhered to, by the crown, lords, and commons, the people might be happy, and the king beloved and honoured. But as often as I expressed these thoughts, I always was answered: "This is impossible, England cannot be governed, but by parties." Indeed, considering the English form of government, it can hardly be otherwise. Authority, and the lust of power, are things which too easily take possession of the mind: they seem to be of  
an

an elastic quality; they resist and want to extend the more, the more they are confined. There is no nation whose history this assertion can more verify than the English, and the good sense and spirit of the people has nowhere struggled harder and oftener in opposition to arbitrary power, than on their island. In the times of queen Elizabeth, and of her father Henry, this spirit was, however, much less manifested than afterwards. The undetermined prerogatives of the crown were so extensive, and encroached so much upon the rights of the people, that, at that period, the crown might almost be said to be in possession both of the executive and the legislative power. Soon after the royal and the republican ingredients of the English constitution began to wrestle very hard with each other, which of the two should fall to the ground. In the time of Cromwell, the republican proved to be victorious; but how far that would have been the case, if he had lived longer, may reasonably be questioned.

I have before observed, that the power of the crown in England is very great; and though the privileges and power of the parliament seem to be very extensive likewise, yet the influence of the crown may generally procure a majority

majority in both houses, and by these means become in fact the legislative power, and do as it pleases, though in appearance every thing seems to be done constitutionally. Hence the English distinguish between real government and apparent; hence government is called the public; and the money which is raised by taxes in the nation, and which is under the controul of government, and the majority of the house of commons on the side of the minister, is called the treasure of the public, or public money. I mention this, because a foreigner will not find these significations of the word *public* mentioned in any English dictionary.

Rapin says, " The policy of the kings " (speaking of the successors of Henry V.) " turned wholly upon governing their parliaments by secret intrigues, without discovering any desire of altering the constitution? " This practice, excepting perhaps the reigns of some princes, particularly those of Henry VIII. who sometimes acted in a very arbitrary manner, has been continued to modern times. If the ministers of the crown have sufficient money and patronage to procure a majority in

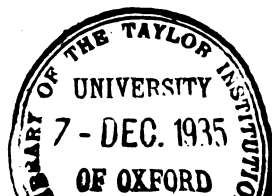
7 Hist. of England, vol. ii. p. 797. Dissertation on Whigs and Tories.

their favour, they are safe, and enabled to govern as they like, or to do as they are ordered by their master. It is difficult for those who are either poor, or avaricious, to resist the temptations of gold, and keep clear from the contaminations of bribery and corruption. At parliamentary elections, money circulates very freely, and that party which wants to prove victorious on such occasions, is generally profuse in bribes. However, these very means, so often, and so justly blamed, prove at the same time the liberty which the nation enjoys. Instances occur in ancient times, in which kings have directed whom electors should return as their representatives, and these directions have been sometimes complied with; but at present the ministers of the crown stand in need of costly means to procure to themselves parliamentary interest, which shews at once that despotism is out of the question. Hence it might farther very properly be asked, whether a minister, who employs bribery in order to have persons returned for the house of commons who are in his interest, is more to be blamed, or those who had it in their power to choose for their own advantage, but suffered themselves to be corrupted, and afterwards complain, that the majority of the parliament, according

according to their judgment, is not in favour of liberty and the people? It is however, evident from this very circumstance, that if there were no power in the English constitution, which had both inclination and sufficient means to corrupt, parliament would be more free and patriotic; its deliberations and debates would be influenced by nothing, but the desire to promote the happiness and welfare of the nation. Instead of this the royal power and prerogatives are a kind of a perpetual thunder-cloud, which hovers over the liberties of the people. It avails little to say, that the house of commons alone has the power of raising money by taxes and other impositions, and therefore has the best check upon ambitious designs, or any arbitrary proceedings of the ministers of the crown; for if these have procured a majority in this very house, they may grant public money as they please, and raise it by taxes as they think proper. The nobility inclines almost in every country to the side of the government, and in England it is particularly so. It is, therefore, no wonder, that in the upper house the majority is almost always for the crown, when so many of the nobility enjoy lucrative places, which are in the gift of the king. The case is the same in the lower house, where

D 2

many



many, on account of pensions and places, are dependent on the minister, or are related to lords who are in the interest of the crown. Whether the new American constitution, by having only a president, whose office is limited to four years, and at the same time no nobility or house of lords, will be free from those inconveniences which attend the British constitution, time alone can discover.

The history of all ages demonstrates, that in those countries where the right of property is established, the richest man has the greatest sway, and is generally most respected. In all republics, the most wealthy citizens have been dangerous to liberty. Rome, and other free states, were by these means bent down under the yoke of monarchical government; and the history of Florence evinces the same truth in modern times. If, therefore, the constitution of England should ever be altered, I am of the same opinion with David Hume<sup>s</sup>, that it will rather change to an absolute monarchy than to an entire republican government; though I most sincerely join the excellent author of the Commentaries on the Laws of England, in his wish to the British constitution as it now is,

<sup>s</sup> Essays, vol. i. p. 27.

*Esto perpetua* ! Since, however, nothing in this world is perpetual, it is by no means impossible, that, in future times, princes of ambition may seize such opportunities as have offered in former times, but which have been neglected, to render their power absolute. In the reign of Henry VIII. an act was passed by the parliament, by which the king was empowered, with the advice of his council, to issue proclamations, enjoining obedience under whatever pains and penalties he should think proper ; and which proclamations were to have the force of perpetual laws<sup>9</sup>. The prerogative of issuing proclamations, with a power of exacting obedience to them, as it was exercised even before the passing of this statute, is called by Hume “ a strong symptom of absolute government<sup>10</sup>.” He likewise says, “ that the people “ in those times had little notion of being “ jealous of their liberties, were desirous of “ making the crown independent, and wished

<sup>9</sup> It seems, however, manifest, that the parliament which framed this extraordinary act, did not intend that it should have so extensive an operation as some writers have supposed ; for the same parliament afterwards enacted, though with some inconsistency, that no proclamation should deprive any person of his lawful possessions, liberties, inheritances, privileges, franchises ; nor yet infringe any laudable custom of the realm.

<sup>10</sup> Hist. of England, vol. v. p. 197.

“only to remove from themselves, as much as possible, the burthens of government. A large standing army, and a fixed revenue, would, on these conditions, have been regarded as great blessings”. Burnet says, “I have seen the nation thrice on the brink of ruin.—After the Restoration all were running fast into slavery; had king Charles II. been attentive to those bad designs (which he pursued afterwards with more caution), upon his first return, slavery and absolute power might have been settled into law with a revenue able to maintain it<sup>1</sup>. Had Cromwell lived longer, or had he had a successor, on whom his spirit had devolved, the English nation might, by this time, have been used to absolute monarchy, already more than a century. What has happened formerly, may happen again, notwithstanding the encomiums that are passed, perhaps with more confidence than truth, on what are honoured with the appellation of enlightened times.

It is in vain to say, that the spirit of Britons would never suffer them to submit to be treated

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 456, note. The justice of this statement of Mr. Hume, respecting the disposition of the people of England at that period, is not, however, universally admitted, though I think it to be a very true one.

<sup>2</sup> Hist. of his Own Times, vol. i. p. 649.



like Frenchmen formerly, or like Spaniards; for English history furnishes reigns of kings, who have treated their subjects in a very arbitrary manner. Even members of parliament have been imprisoned, at the will of some sovereigns, or their favourites. Juries were oftentimes no security to the liberty of the people, the jurors being overawed by the royal power, and sometimes even fined when they gave verdicts contrary to the will of the judges dependent on the crown. Nay, there are reigns in which juries seem to have been unknown, or at least as little in use, as they are at this very day in some parts of Scotland. That noble aversion, which the nation hitherto has shewn against standing armies, seems to wear off by degrees. Twenty years ago, when I came first into England, the inhabitants of London would not so calmly have submitted to be pushed off in the streets from the footway, with the but-end of a musket, by a troop of soldiers, marching two a breast as they do at present. The excise laws, which in England are as severe as in any country, have likewise been imposed, and very tamely adopted. What, therefore, has happened in former times, inconsistent with liberty, may happen again in those which are to come.

Whoever views the British constitution, as it now actually appears, cannot but easily discover many things, which stand greatly in need of a reform. I shall mention only a few. It is frequently said, that the English nation is happy and free, because they are their own legislators, being represented in parliament. I verily believe, that the real intention of the constitution is, that it should be so. But considering that the number of inhabitants, in England and Wales, is generally estimated at between six and seven millions, among whom are only 260,000 <sup>3</sup> that are intitled to vote at elections for members of parliament; can it be said, that the nation chooses its own representatives? Is it true, that it is sufficiently represented by 513 members of the house of commons, deducting 45 for Scotland, when many flourishing towns send no representatives at all, and others by no means in proportion to the number of their inhabitants? When the votes of those who come into the house of commons for

<sup>3</sup> It was asserted in the House of Commons, on the 25th of April, 1782, that in the above mentioned number were included 60,000 excise and custom-house officers, together with others who are dependent on the crown, and consequently vote as they are directed. But excise-officers, and custom-house officers, have since, by act of parliament, been rendered incapable of voting.

## CONSTITUTION. 41

decayed places, called rotten boroughs, are in all respects full as good as any other parliamentary vote given? Is it to be supposed, that those who, perhaps, have paid three, or more thousand pounds, for the honour of representing such a borough, have given that sum away merely with a view of doing good to their country? Foreigners, indeed, have too great an opinion of this representation of the nation, and of its being its own legislator. They do not know the proportion which the represented bear to the number of those that represent them; they are little acquainted with the manner in which the elections are carried on; they are often credulous enough to believe, that all the laws originate from the whole body of the people, by means of their representatives, when the most important bills or laws are generally brought in by the ministers of the crown, and carried through by their decided majorities. Even Montesquieu, though he had visited England, betrays in his encomium on the British constitution †, that his notions, particularly with respect to what concerns the representation in parliament, were not altogether conformable to truth, but contradicted by

† L'Esprit des Loix, liv. xi. ch. vi. tom. I. p. 257.

experience. He intimates, that the representatives of towns and boroughs were inhabitants of the places which they represented<sup>5</sup>; and says, that every citizen had a right to vote for their representatives, excepting those who are in so low a station, that they might be reputed to have no will of their own<sup>6</sup>. When I first came into England, I entertained a notion similar to that of Montesquieu; but I am now of opinion, that there are many boroughs which are represented by a person, of whom those that choose him, often know as little as he knows of them; and the small number, which I have before remarked, who have a right to vote, clearly shews how much Montesquieu was also in that respect mistaken.

Since a representation, which is proportionable to the number of the inhabitants of the realm, must be considered as an essential part of the constitution, it is a subject of surprize, that the number of members of the house of commons is not increased; that large towns and boroughs remain unrepresented; and that the representation of those should be continued which are totally decayed. But the reasons why these improvements are not adopted, are

<sup>5</sup> *L'Esprit de Loix*, liv. xi. ch. vi. tom. I. p. 264.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* p. 265.

## CONSTITUTION. 43

sufficiently obvious. It has been proposed, within these few years, to add some new members to the house of commons; and there was undoubtedly abundant reason for such a measure. It has, nevertheless, been opposed and rejected. Some were of opinion, that such a measure would be a dangerous innovation. "Leave," it was said, "the old venerable fabric of the constitution as it is: do not tamper with it." They certainly did not recollect, that the house of commons has even in modern times increased in numbers. In the reign of Charles I. there were only 494 members; and consequently, since that time, 19 new representations in parliament have taken place. The very intention of the venerable fabric of the constitution, if I may repeat the expression, is, that it should be ornamented with the picture, or representation, of every town or borough in England; but how many of them, though of note, and in a flourishing condition, are totally unrepresented! The fact is, that ministers who are attached to and fond of the system of bribery and corruption, would find the sums too great that would be required to answer their purpose, if the number of the members of the house of commons were increased. They might even experience their  
influ-

## THE ENGLISH

influence at new elections too weak, if it were to be extended over a number of unrepresented places in England, and still more in Scotland. It reflects, therefore, no small honour on a minister of the crown, and his constitutional principles, when he shewed himself, a few years ago, inclined to favour an increase of representation, which was proposed in parliament, though the scheme afterwards miscarried. All the increase of representatives in the house of commons would, however, avail but little, if the number of the peers be not limited. For if they can be created by dozens at once, as was actually done in the year 1711, it will be always in the power of a minister to gain a majority in the upper house, to counterbalance the patriotism of the house of commons.

Another reason why the representation of the nation in parliament is not altogether consistent with the ends that it should answer, may be derived from those members who sit as delegates of the people, though they are universally known to be dependents on the crown, because they enjoy places and pensions given by government. It is true, there is a law which enacts, that whenever a member accepts a place from the crown, his seat in the house is immediately

diately vacated ; but in such cases they are generally re-elected. If those who have it in their option to choose whom they please, elect such persons again, it is their own fault ; and, perhaps, it may be said, that government cannot be blamed. But the case is generally different ; for the election is carried on under the influence of the crown. It is, however, the depravity and venality of the greatest part of the electors, which, beyond any thing else, destroys the spirit, and defeats the intention of the constitution. A foreigner, who has never been present at those scenes in England, when the representatives of the people in parliament are chosen for seven years, cannot possibly form a proper idea of them. Numbers of those who give their votes for a man, whom they intrust with a septennial care of their rights and liberties, do it in a state of intoxication. The riots, which then so frequently happen, are a reproach to the police, and a scandal to all sober people, and to all who have any regard for morality and virtue. It is a singular sight, during an election, to see persons of quality, who wish to be chosen, or their friends, enter the cottages of the poor, squeeze their hands, salute their wives and daughters, promise a great deal, and open houses for those  
who

who will vote for them, where, at their expence, roast beef, plum pudding, ale, wine, and spirituous liquors, are served liberally and plentifully. All seem then to be upon an equality; generosity and condescension, united with the fairest promises, are conspicuous to a degree, which might charm a stranger, who was not acquainted with the views of the candidates, and the manœuvres practised on such occasions. But the scene greatly alters when he who canvassed for votes has obtained his end. He then commonly gives himself little concern about those who chose him, and has their interest, perhaps, no more at heart than that of the inhabitants of Madagascar. There are laws against bribery at elections, but they are easily evaded. Those who have acquired great riches in the East Indies, and whom the English call nabobs, do not care how much they pay for the honour of a seat in parliament. Nay, it is even said, that the nabob of Arcot has sometimes furnished gentlemen with the sums, requisite to procure a seat in the house of commons, that they might take care of his interest, if there should be occasion for it, when East India affairs are before the parliament. According to this state of things, every prince on the continent might, if he thought proper, have



## CONSTITUTION. 47

have his own members in the house of commons; and what Jugurtha said of Rome might be applied to the British senate, "That it might be bought by him who could afford to give the proper price."

I shall mention only one thing more, which seems to militate against the original design of the constitution. I mean the duration of a parliament, which includes at present seven years. This is certainly a long time, for a majority in the lower house, which is on the side of the crown, to encroach on the rights and liberties of the people. It is worth a bad man's while to buy a seat in the house: for he may well entertain hopes, that, during seven years, he shall find means not only to reimburse himself, but also to get something profitable from those by whom his vote may be wanted. The *commune consilium*, or common council, which is mentioned in Magna Charta, though very different from the present form of British parliaments, may yet be considered as the foundation of them. The summonses for those common councils were issued forty days before their meeting, and the cause of the summons was also declared, that they might know the reasons

7 Urbem venalem,—si emptorem invenerit.

SALLUST. de Bello Jugurth. c. 39.  
for

for which they met, and come prepared accordingly. If the English think their Magna Charta so sacred as they pretend it to be, why have they deviated from the good intentions of their Great Charter in favour of their liberties? Why do those who have a right to send representatives, place an unlimited trust in them for seven whole years, without knowing for what they send them, the article of granting taxes, and drawing money out of their pockets, only excepted, of which in the present times they may always be extremely certain? If parliaments lasted only for a year, or even for three, it would not be so easy as it is now, for a minister of the crown to obtain a majority. The treasury may afford every seven years the expences of a general election; but if parliaments were annual, or triennial, it would soon be found, that the sums spent in procuring a majority could not be afforded, and elections would of course be more free and more disinterested, because the public welfare would be the only interest which the greater part of the electors would have in view. There has been of late years an annual motion made for triennial parliaments, but it must ever be unsuccessful, while the minister has a decided majority against it. Besides, even those who are not his friends,

friends, would hardly vote for shortening the duration of parliaments, except they were certain of being re-chosen without much expence; for at present most of the members of the lower house, who have given themselves great trouble to obtain a seat, recollect how difficult and expensive a business it was. Shortening the duration of parliament must, therefore, be the result of the exertion of the people themselves; for as matters are circumstanced, it will hardly ever originate either from the crown, or from a majority of the house of commons.

Various causes, since the latter part of the reign of king James I. have occasioned state-parties to subsist in England without interruption. In this respect the English government appears to me to be a kind of political Manicheism, where a good God, and an evil one, seem to be always at war against each other. The power of the crown and the liberty of the people are, in their very nature, contradictory to one another; and yet, if I were to be asked, whether it would not be better that one of these deities were subdued? I should be at a loss what answer to give; for I believe there would be parties notwithstanding. At present, the court has its party, and so have the people. Some adhere to their party from principle;

VOL. I.

E

others

others from interest, and selfish motives. I know, however, from my own observation, that it is a mistaken notion to suppose, that every one who is of the court party is not a friend to his country, or that a real patriot is always against the court. Those who, from natural disposition, are attached to liberty, are always jealous of every thing that threatens to invade the rights of mankind; they will submit rather to any thing than bear those fetters of usurped power, which the bulk of people suffer so easily to be put on. There are many in England, who are animated by this noble spirit of liberty; but their number is small, when compared with that of the whole nation. Mock patriots are in abundance in this country. They talk much of liberty and the constitution, but with no other view than to raise themselves, and to gratify their ambition, or to take revenge when it is disappointed. The members of the established church are generally greater friends to monarchical government than the Dissenters, though there are many of the latter denomination who wish well to the crown, because they think that monarchical government is less subject to broils and fermentation than the republican. The reason why many of the Dissenters are addicted to republicanism, or  
at

at least to a greater limitation of the regal power than some of the Churchmen, may be easily accounted for. The constitution of their congregations, or religious assemblies, is not favourable to subordination, and inclines much towards independence; which, at least in former times, has had an influence on their principles of political government. The oppression which their forefathers experienced from the episcopal church, under the sanction of royalty, is another reason, which is strengthened by the exclusion of Dissenters from all lucrative posts and offices, both in church and state.

The old denominations of state-parties, such as Whigs and Tories, High-flyers and Jacobites, are at present not very common; at least the two last are now almost forgotten. Patriots and courtiers are the fashionable words; and these are also sometimes distinguished by the appellation of *Ins* and *Outs*. Those who bask in the sunshine of royal favour, who partake of the good things which government has to bestow, and who can introduce their relations and friends to share with them in the loaves and fishes, are called the *Ins*. The *Outs*, or the opposition, in the mean time, do all that lies in their power to drive them from their lucrative places, and seat themselves in them. They

generally, when they are out, adopt the mask of patriotism, but throw it aside as useless, and turn courtiers again, when they are in possession of what they wanted. This kind of sport-  
 ing between the Ins and Outs, who shall be the king's ministers, is very frequent and very expensive; for the Ins when they are obliged to go out, are very often provided with pensions for life, which the nation is to pay. The people themselves, though the money comes out of their pockets, seem not to mind it, but rather keep up the sport by factions among themselves, in favour of one party or the other; for they are seldom long satisfied with any administration. Indeed, there is no depending upon them. The English are as changeable as any nation on the globe; and of this, among other proofs, the frequent changes of their ministry may be considered as an evidence. They sometimes appear inclined even to idolize their kings, while at other times they will set aside the most common respect which it has been usual to pay to monarchs. James II. was obliged to escape in disguise to one of the sea-ports, in order to pass over into France. When he was brought back from Feversham, the people, who had been exasperated against him, received him with shouts and acclamations. Perhaps little was wanting to have replaced  
 him

## CONSTITUTION. 53

him on the throne, and to have sent the saviour of the English constitution and liberty back again to Holland. So much truth is there in the observation of Virgil,

*Scinditur incertum studia in contraria vulgus.*

Whoever reflects on the restoration of Charles II. cannot but be surprised at the suddenness with which the people repassed from republicanism to monarchical government. The prayers which to this day are read in the episcopal churches, to commemorate what is called the Martyrdom of Charles I. and the Restoration of Charles II. may serve as a proof of the servile submission of the people, at the time when these prayers were introduced. Indeed, it may be questioned, whether people who can say them seriously deserve to be free? It is, however, curious enough to see, how one part of the nation, I mean those of the established church, are resorting on the day of king Charles's Martyrdom to church, to implore the Deity to forgive the sin of their forefathers, in putting to death a king; while many of the Dissenters openly express their approbation of Charles's execution, and express their full satisfaction in the conduct of those republicans who brought him to the block.

ON THE ENGLISH LAWS, COURTS  
OF JUDICATURE, AND THE  
MANNER OF ADMINISTERING  
JUSTICE.

IN England, properly speaking, there are but two kinds of law in general use, the COMMON LAW, and the STATUTE LAW. The *civil* and *canon laws* are used only in certain peculiar courts and jurisdictions, where they are adopted by custom. The common law is of the same kind as that which we call in Germany *Herkommen*, and comprehends those customs and usages which have, from time immemorial, obtained the authority and sanction of laws. Some of these customs prevail over the whole kingdom; others are confined to certain districts. Besides these, there are particular rules and customs, adopted in particular courts of judicature, which, by length of time, have obtained the authority of law. Those customs, which go under the denomination of common law, derive their origin chiefly from the Saxons. Alfred the Great was, in all probability, the first who began to collect them into a code, or book, which  
might



might serve as a rule in courts of judicature; though this collection afterwards became more known under the name of the Laws of Edward the Confessor. William the Conqueror adopted the greatest part of them, added some of the Norman laws, and had the whole translated into his own language. These customs, however, which now compose a great part of the common law, were soon found insufficient for the decision of many cases. To remedy this deficiency, another species of law was added, which is called *the statute law*. It consists of acts, or edicts, made by both houses of parliament, and sanctioned as laws by the assent of the king. These statutes are almost innumerable, and the collection of them is a monster in its kind. The last edition of this code of laws, published by Owen Ruffhead, amounts to more than twelve volumes in quarto. Many of these acts have been drawn up by persons who were by no means qualified for such a business; and, in some instances, they contradict each other. Hence, and from the obscurity with which many of them are worded, arises the English proverbial expression of *the glorious uncertainty of the law*, so beneficial to the lawyers, and which renders their profession so lucrative. It has been more than once pro-

posed, during the time of my residence in England, to reform the statute law, and by comprehending the whole, or at least the general and public statutes, in a proper and well digested code, to make it less liable to misconstruction, more concise, more intelligible to common understandings, and more useful for regulating the decisions of courts of judicature. The necessity of such a reform is acknowledged by the most eminent lawyers themselves; but it has hitherto always been neglected. The want of eminent and able men to execute this business cannot be pleaded as an excuse; for there are many, to my own knowledge, abundantly qualified for it. Besides, the character, as well as credit of a nation, which is proud of a free and well constituted government, and whose wisdom in legislation is justly extolled by surrounding states and kingdoms, seem absolutely to require it.

The civil and the canon law are permitted to be used in four courts only, and even then under different restrictions. For if either the civil law, which, properly speaking, is the *Roman law*, or the canon law, which is the *Roman ecclesiastical law*, come into any collision with the common or the statute law, the former must always give way, and their authority  
is

is nothing when contradicted by the latter. The courts, in which the civil or canon laws are received, are the ecclesiastical, the military, the admiralty courts, and the courts of the two universities. Their reception, however, which is dated from the reign of king Stephen, is owing to custom, confirmed by acts of parliament; and it may be said, that the authority of these laws, in many other European countries so highly respected, is in England only on sufferance.

For the honour of the English laws, and the English nation, torture and the rack were never admitted in the ordinary execution of justice. It is true, that, in the time of queen Elizabeth, the rack and torture were sometimes used; but when, under a following reign, the privy council consulted the judges, whether the assassin Felton might be put to the rack, they unanimously declared, that such a proceeding was not allowable by the laws of England. A century has elapsed since this declaration; though some other European nations have not yet adopted those sentiments of humanity, which long ago have honoured the laws of the English, and their administration of justice!

Among

Among the very visible and much lamented imperfections of human institutions, laws, and government, the great expence attending the administration of justice, according to law, is certainly not one of the least. If it cannot be done without some expence, it ought at least to be rendered as small as possible. After societies were formed, one of the first views with which laws were made, and governments erected, was, that justice might be administered; yet there is no country, which lays claim to any civilization, where the expences for obtaining justice, according to law, are not complained of; and, I believe, there is no where more reason for it than in England. This, however, ought to be said, in favour of the English courts of judicature, as they are at present, in preference to those among other nations, that justice is administered, few instances perhaps excepted, with great impartiality; and that despotism, bribery, riches, and all those foul sources which too much influence courts of judicature in other countries, do not contaminate the British. This, I think, may, in some degree, balance the great expence, which generally attends the administration of justice in England.

Many

Many are the law courts, as well for administering justice and redressing wrongs, as for giving opportunities for the litigious to get rid of their money. Some of them are of an inferior, others of a superior kind. I shall say only a few words of the latter. The first of them is the court of chancery, the highest of all the courts of judicature, the house of peers excepted, to which, as the last resort, appeals from all other courts lie open. The lord chancellor is here the judge, assisted by twelve masters in chancery, who are generally doctors of law. In the absence of the chancellor, the master of the Rolls supplies his place. This court divides itself into two distinct tribunals; the one is called the ordinary or common law court, the other the extraordinary or court of equity. I believe there are very few countries besides England, if any, where the rigour of the law is wisely moderated by a court of equity; and yet I have reason to think that even here, notwithstanding the existence of a court of equity, the instances are not unfrequent, where, when sentence is pronounced, it might be exclaimed, *summum jus summa injuria*. Law suits in this court are very tedious, and very costly. A bill filed in chancery often takes up more than a hundred sheets of paper; and the answers to it,

it, with the replies, as many, together with the evidence given upon oath, which is not taken publicly from the witnesses, but privately in writing. Every sheet contains but very few lines, and every line but a certain limited number of words. I have seen many law-writings on the continent, but none written so wide as these; not, as it might be supposed, to obtain justice at a moderate price, or to lessen the costs of suit. The gentlemen of the law, who transact the business in this court, are generally looked upon as the most eminent in their profession; and the high road to the great law-offices of state lies through this court of chancery. People in Germany often wonder that in England, a man born in a humble situation in life, may stand a chance of filling some of the highest and most lucrative offices of state; but here it is neither the pedigree, nor the favour of a prince, that always promotes to high stations. Merit will frequently raise a man in England, though I have found, that circumstances, connexions, patronage, and party spirit, must too often give the first lift to merit, if it be not to remain unrewarded, and buried in oblivion. There is, however, no country in Europe, where the old saying, *dat Justinianus honores*, is oftener

oftener verified than in England, and not only in regard to honours, but riches also.

The court of king's bench is the second in rank, and the principal of all those where the common law prevails. Out of the four judges in this court, the first is called lord chief justice of England, because his jurisdiction extends over all the kingdom. All processes issuing out of this court are in the king's name, and the kings themselves used to preside here in ancient times, whence it derives its denomination. It takes cognizance both of criminal and civil causes. Though from inferior courts appeals may be made to this, yet, even from this, the party that is not satisfied with the determination of the court of king's bench, may remove it by writ of error into the house of lords, as the *dernier resort*.

The court of common pleas decides on actions brought by subjects against subjects, according to the rigour of the law, and has likewise four judges, of whom the first is called lord chief justice of the common pleas.

The court of exchequer is a tribunal to call the king's debtors to an account, and those who defraud the revenue of the crown. It is a kind of inquisition in its way, and, as I am informed, a very rigorous one, particularly  
since

since the excise laws have been so much extended. Whoever is called before this court, and who is conscious of being in debt to the crown, or of having defrauded it, may readily say to himself: Thou shalt by no means come out hence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing. This court has a chancellor<sup>s</sup>, who is generally the first minister, and has the key to the treasury. He is always a member of the house of commons, where the constitution has very wisely fixed the granting and the disposing of the public money. But, since the king appoints him, it is frequently thought by the English that some of these chancellors have been only the mouth by which he speaks to the commons, and that such prime ministers have sometimes managed the affairs of state, and public revenues, by corrupted majorities, more to the interest of the crown and their own, than for that of the nation. Of some chancellors it has even been suspected, that they have not been extremely conscientious in keeping their accounts of the public money. A

<sup>s</sup> Though the chancellor of the exchequer is spoken of as at the head of this court, it must be observed, that he never presides in it in any causes between the crown and the subject. Causes in this court are tried by juries, and the barons of the exchequer preside.



prime minister declared some years ago<sup>9</sup> in the house of commons, that he had found out six and twenty millions which were not yet accounted for, though spent long ago. Supposing, however, that there really was some foundation for such suspicions as I have mentioned, it is certainly not the fault of the constitution that such things happen, but the evil originates somewhere else. The place of a chancellor of the exchequer, though a responsible one, is much envied, not only because it is very honourable, and extremely lucrative, but likewise on account of the great patronage which is annexed to it, by whose means a minister can serve his old friends, and make many new ones. As for the responsibility, he has not much to fear, if the majority of the house of commons be on his side. If he loses that, he loses his place, and may be called to an account. But in these days of septennial parliaments, he can easily procure a majority, being at the head of the treasury, and of all affairs of state; and it is in his power to stamp all his ministerial transactions with the sanction of parliament. Should he, however, find himself in danger, and fear an impeachment, he may have a king's patent for a peer-

<sup>9</sup> February 16, 1785.

## 64 ON THE ENGLISH

age in his pocket; and after producing it, bow to his adversaries in the house of commons, retiring up to that of the lords, where he is pretty safe. We in Germany, as well as in other countries, entertain oftentimes a notion of the responsibility of a prime minister in England, which, in our eyes, makes his place appear to be a very dangerous one, and that he may receive his deserts for mal-administration on a block on Tower-hill; but this danger is imaginary. A prime minister under a despotic prince on the continent, has more to fear from the whims of his master, and the envy and malice of his favourites, than an English minister has from his nation, and its representatives. Indeed, from what I have seen on many changes of administration, during my residence in England, I have reason to think, that the thought or fear of responsibility, never keeps any body from endeavouring to get into the high offices of government. They all trust to their honesty, to the uprightness of their intentions, and to their good consciences, never entertaining any fear about the possibility of being called to an account.

Besides the chancellor, the court of exchequer has four judges, who are called barons of the exchequer. These four, together with  
the

the foregoing eight, in the court of king's bench and the court of common pleas, make the twelve judges, who are appointed for life, and receive very handsome salaries, that they may be above all temptations of bribery and corruption<sup>10</sup>.

The manner of administering justice in England, has, upon the whole, something particular, and is certainly superior to that which prevails at present in other countries. Among these preferences I reckon first the trial by a jury, on whose judgment depends the verdict of guilty or not guilty. It is beyond the power of a judge to condemn or to absolve a person accused, as he thinks proper. Here are twelve men, who perhaps may one time or other stand in the same predicament, or be in the same situation as the accused or the defendant, and who are his equals, that are to judge upon oath, from the evidence given, whether he falls under the censure of the law, or not.

<sup>10</sup> Here follows, in the German original, a summary account of some judicial courts and of subordinate magistrates: but since these things are well known to Englishmen, it is not translated. Sir William Blackstone, in his excellent Commentaries on the Laws of England, treats very amply on courts public and general, as well as of special jurisdiction, Vol. iii. c. 4, 5, 6; on courts of a criminal jurisdiction, Vol. iv. c. 19; of subordinate magistrates, Vol. i. c. 9.

In this manner, a single trial, of a few hours, will terminate a civil or a criminal process at once, which, in other countries, perhaps would last months or years.

This method of administering justice is derived from the Saxons, and may be looked upon as the best means to protect the poorer subjects against the oppressions of the opulent and the more powerful. Thus only can the laws be vindicated against that reproach, which Rousseau endeavours to cast upon them, as if they were only instruments in the hands of the powerful to oppress the feeble and the poor<sup>1</sup>. The English history furnishes many instances to the contrary, and refutes his assertion, which he has subjoined in a note, to his text, that the general spirit of the laws of all countries favours always the stronger against the weaker, and the rich against the poor; and that this is an inevitable inconvenience, and one that is without exception<sup>2</sup>. We meet in the annals of  
England,

<sup>1</sup> Il y a dans l'état civil une égalité de droit chimérique et vaine, parceque les moyens destinés à la maintenir servent eux-mêmes à la détruire et que la force publique ajoutée au plus fort pour opprimer le foible, rompt l'espece d'équilibre que la nature avoit mis entre eux. Oeuvres de Rousseau, tom. vii. p. 164. Edit. Amst. 1762. 8vo.

<sup>2</sup> L'esprit universel des loix de tous les pays est de favoriser toujours le fort contre le foible, et celui qu'a, contre celui

England, and in the history of her laws, proofs enough, that not only the oppressive intentions of the great and the opulent, but even of tyrannical princes, have been and may be frustrated. However, as human institutions are never free from imperfections, so it is the same in this instance ; for the influence of the court has, sometimes, been so great, that juries have been packed, or over-awed, to give verdicts, according to the wish of those by whom they were directed. English historians relate several facts, which prove this assertion ; but I can hardly persuade myself that in modern times any thing similar has been done, though there are people who believe this to have been the case.

Yet we ought not to think that the English are the only nation, which has reserved the judging in criminal cases to itself, and that nothing like it had existed before Alfred the Great. The Saxons, and other northern nations, did the same. Even ancient history furnishes instances of a similar kind. I will not refer to the Greek republics, but only quote the account which Quintus Curtius gives of the tragical execution of Philotas, where he

*celui qui n'a rien ; cet inconvénient est inévitable et il est sans exception. ROUSSEAU, l. c. note 9, p. 165.*

makes this observation, that the Macedonian kings durst not inflict punishment in capital crimes, until, in war time, the army, and in time of peace the people, had inquired into the fact, and declared the accused guilty<sup>3</sup>. When Rome was free, a citizen could choose his own judges; nay, even in the second century this privilege prevailed during the reign of Trajan, if Pliny tells the truth in his panegyric upon this emperor<sup>4</sup>. A man might then reject those of his judges he did not like; he might exclaim, "I will not have him, because he is too timid, and too little acquainted with the goodness of the times; and I reject the other because he is too much addicted to the prince." But all this is trifling when compared to an English jury, which is greatly preferable, and may be justly styled the glory of the English law. So much care is taken, in selecting the jurymen, in hearing the evidence, and in preventing an unjust verdict being given, that I sometimes have been at a loss which to

<sup>3</sup> De capitalibus rebus, vetusto Macedonum modo inquirebat exercitus, in pace erat vulgi. Nihil potestas regum valebat, nisi prius valuisset auctoritas. CURTIUS, lib. vi. c. 8. *in fine*.

<sup>4</sup> Licet rejicere, licet exclamare, hunc nolo, timidus est et bona seculi parum intelligit; illum nolo quia Cæsarem fortiter amat. PLIN. *Panegy.* c. 36.

admire

admire most, particularly in criminal cases, whether the excellency of this manner of judging itself, or the wisdom and ingenuity of the laws which are made to obviate perversion of justice, to prevent the jurymen from being biassed by any means, or the accused from having any reason to complain, that justice was not fairly administered. Twelve men, who are supposed to be unacquainted with the wretched chicane of the law, chosen out of six and thirty, and approved by the accused himself, are to judge whether he be guilty or not. They are upon oath, and to be guided by common sense, by the evidence given in their presence, and by their consciences. The whole process is a work of few hours, and the accused knows his fate. When to this mode of proceeding are added the benefits of the Habeas Corpus act, which I have mentioned before, it may be truly said, that the English manner of administering justice is preferable to any other<sup>s</sup>.

After these just encomiums on the proceedings in English courts of judicature, let me add a few observations and strictures, which

<sup>s</sup> In the German original follows a more ample description of an English trial, and an account of the benefit of clergy, which being well known to English readers are here omitted.

do not lessen the value of the constitution itself, but relate only to history and to some abuses. In the first place, therefore, I shall remark, that the trial by juries, though of a very ancient date, had, however, never before that respectability and that impartiality, which it has obtained since the Revolution under king William. Not full three hundred years are elapsed, since under Henry VII. juries were often set aside and judgment given in a summary manner, and by arbitrary decrees ; or, if juries even were summoned they were fined, imprisoned, and punished, if they gave a verdict against the inclination of the crown. Things went on not much better in the times of Henry VIII. and queen Elizabeth ; nay, I have been told that in some parts of Scotland, trials by juries are even now not much in use ; and it is well known, that the Canadians have hitherto in vain solicited for this mode of administering justice to them, though they are British subjects. In the second place I cannot help observing, that the carelessness or the levity, with which oaths are taken and administered in English courts, must strike a foreigner, who is accustomed to look upon such a ceremony as a thing which is not to be trifled with, in a society where the loss of liberty and property, the loss



of character and life itself, depends oftentimes on an oath, which is sworn in a court of judicature. But it certainly cannot make the best impressions on a man of principle, to see in London, a person swearing ten oaths almost in a breath at the custom-house, without seemingly knowing what he is about, and afterwards finding him at the Old Bailey giving evidence, in a case where the life and death of a fellow-creature are concerned, with almost the same indifference as when he swore at the custom-house. Indeed things, I am told, are carried so far, that people may be hired, who, for a trifling gratuity, will swear any thing. Let the constitution of the courts of law be ever so good, and the intentions of judge and jury be ever so just and humane; yet an innocent person may, though seldom, be condemned, because the profligacy of the witnesses made them regardless what evidence they gave, though they were upon oath. It is true, perjury is threatened with punishment; but certainly not with one that is sufficiently severe; and a crime like this, which ought to be classed amongst the most horrid, is too frequently connived at from a mistaken lenity. There is another thing that will excite the attention of a foreigner, in an English court of judicature, which I shall

mention in the third place ; I mean the examining of the witnesses, and the speeches which are made by the different counsellors of each party. It has often given me pleasure, when I have observed the dexterity and ingenuity with which some of them manage these examinations, and afterwards plead the cause of their clients : but it must hurt the feelings of humanity, to see how some of them bully, ridicule, and even insult the witnesses, by their questions, and the remarks that they make upon them ; which are certainly not always pertinent. Sometimes, when the character or appearance of a witness betrays dishonesty or profligacy, it may be very necessary to confound, to surprize, and to expose him ; but if a man of character, or a man whose evidence is distinguished by its artless simplicity, is made a subject of ridicule and laughter before the whole court, merely to give a lawyer an opportunity of displaying his talents for abuse, and low wit, at the expence of a good member of society, this is certainly extremely censurable, and what a court of justice ought not to countenance. The dignity of a court of judicature, good manners and decency, as well as humanity, revolt against such a way of proceeding ; which, when I have been among the spectators, I expected  
would

would have been checked by the court : but it was connived at. I have been present at the public pleading of causes in my own country, in Holland at Amsterdam, in France at Paris, and in Switzerland at Geneva and at Bern ; but though the orators at those bars were sometimes vehement, yet I do not recollect that any thing came up to what I have heard in England. Whoever has perused with attention, what Cicero<sup>6</sup> and Quintilian<sup>7</sup> say upon this subject, will be of opinion, that they would never authorize what I have sometimes heard, in English courts, either to please and to gain the jury, or to divert the audience. Instances, however, occur, where those who want to make merry at the expence of others, meet with very smart retorts ; and I remember, that a counsellor who examined a witness at the bar, asking him, where he had received his education ? was immediately answered, “ Not at Billingsgate, where you seem to have received yours.”

That no man, upon groundless or malicious accusation, may be troubled with a prosecution, particularly a criminal one, the English laws have wisely instituted a grand jury, to enquire upon their oath, whether there be sufficient

<sup>6</sup> De Oratore, lib. ii. cap. 54. *seq.*

<sup>7</sup> Institut. Orat. lib. xi. cap. 3.

cause to call upon the party to answer it? Evidence is heard upon the written accusation, which is called an *indictment*; and if they find that there is sufficient ground for it, they endorse upon it "a true bill." Upon this the party stands indicted, and is to answer before the court, and a petit jury. Notwithstanding this wise and humane precaution, an innocent person may sometimes be exposed to a prosecution, even a malicious and a criminal one. But the instances of this kind are few, and by no means chargeable to the English constitution and the laws themselves. I do not know at present any country, besides the states of North America, where a subject is more protected against prosecutions of malice and despotism than in the British dominions; under which denomination I do not comprehend either the East Indies or Hanover.

The punishments which the English laws inflict upon offenders, are to their honour far remote from that appearance of cruelty, which they carry along with them in other countries. It is not left to the discretion or opinion of a judge or magistrate, what kind of punishment he chooses to inflict upon offenders; but the English laws themselves have, in most cases, wisely specified the punishment for the different offences.

offences. The judge may moderate, but he can neither alter, nor increase it. It cannot, however, be denied, that the English laws, if not literally too sanguinary, are yet too suffocating ; for the operation of stopping a delinquent's breath, for about an hour, by means of a rope on the gallows, is in England, during one twelve months, more frequently performed, than in all Europe together in the same space of time. Hence it is, that executions of this kind lose all the terrors, which attend them in other countries. The English rogues laugh at them, and say jokingly, It is but hanging. So little is this punishment, as in other countries, regarded as an infamy, that a malefactor is attended by his friends to the very gallows, and highwaymen are buried not only in consecrated church-yards, but even in the still more sacred churches themselves. The notions which the English entertain of crimes and punishments, will, undoubtedly, stagger a foreigner, particularly a Frenchman, or a German, but they are notwithstanding just. It cannot be a stigma upon a whole family, if one that belongs to it, suffers for the transgression of the law ; and it is both cruel and absurd, to punish with infamy the innocent surviving relations of a person, who,

who, by suffering for his crimes, has atoned to the law and to society.

It is very justly said of English punishments, that they are not in proportion to the crimes, and do not produce the end for which they are inflicted, to operate *in terrorem*. A man who commits a most cruel murder is but hanged, and one who from want and hunger robs another of a few shillings is punished in the same manner. A person, whose life must fall a sacrifice to the violated laws of society on account of his crimes, is, no doubt, sufficiently punished by simply inflicting death upon him; but I think that the atrociousness of the crime, and the aggravating circumstances under which it was committed, should be considered, or at least the suffering for crimes less heinous be mitigated. In London, generally every six weeks, seldom less than half a dozen wretches, are exhibited under the gallows, before a croud of many thousands, among whom, perhaps, are at least a hundred who deserve hanging more than some that are just going to suffer. The spectators, who are used to sights of this kind, seem to be entertained with such melancholy exhibitions; they no more see the distressed features under the caps of those that die, than they see the inward pangs and agonies of some before

before they were turned off. The surrounding croud thinks the death of a malefactor more easy than that of many an honest and worthy man who dies on a bed ; and the pickpocket robs under the gallows, looks up to those that are suspended under it, and says very composedly to himself, It is only hanging. I have seen several public executions in Germany, and have observed the awful impressions which they made upon the surrounding thousands of spectators ; but when I saw the first of this kind, many years ago, at Tyburn, it appeared to me, as if it had been a holiday for the entertainment of the populace ; and from that time I left off wondering, that there were so many criminals to be tried every six weeks at the Old Bailey. Sometimes an over zealous clergyman, who attends the malefactors at the execution, contributes not a little to prevent the effect which all kinds of punishment should produce, to deter others by the example of him who suffers, and to prevent future crimes. Some clergymen of this cast, seem to think, that they can transform an abandoned wretch, who never regarded religion, or never knew much of it, into a saint, between the time he is condemned to die, and that of his execution, and endeavour to comfort him, in the moment he is going to  
be

be turned off, with the certain hope, that he is that instant to enter the paradise, to which, as I suppose, they themselves presume to have the key. Newspapers afterwards do their duty, by saying that most of the unhappy victims, that fell a sacrifice to the offended laws of their country, behaved with that decency which their awful situation required, and were, with prayers and pious ejaculations in their mouths, launched into eternity. Indeed, I think, the English have no reason to wonder why the number of their criminals increases every year; for it will certainly continue to be the case, if they do not instil more religious principles into the minds of the young, both by precept and example, and if they do not make their punishments and their executions a little more awful; not for the sake of those who suffer, but for the benefit of those who are to be warned by their example. Formerly the anatomical knife carried some terror along with it, when the body of one who had committed murder was ordered to be dissected; but this prejudice is now pretty well worn off. Transportation, a punishment so frequently inflicted, should to all appearance strike terror into the heart of an Englishman, who is said to love his own country above all others; but I have



have found it to be otherwise. Many transports, who were sent in former times to America, or the West India islands, have fared better there than in their own country, and lessened the fear of exile or transportation. It has been calculated, that each of those, who are cast for transportation, stand government in; or cost the nation, above fifty pounds sterling; a sum, which would enable an honest man, in Germany, to live decently and support a family, assisted by his industry. I remember, that it was once proposed to send those who were, on account of atrocious crimes, condemned to transportation, as slaves to Algiers, to be exchanged for innocent persons kept there in captivity; but this, probably very wholesome proposal, was not adopted; though, in my opinion, if it had been put in practice, it would prove one of the best means to prevent crimes. The pillory, one of the strangest exhibitions of a malefactor in public on a scaffold, and in a situation of which we in Germany have no idea, is a cruel punishment, and worse than death itself, if the populace be permitted to pelt the delinquent. In two or three instances, during my residence in London, have persons, who were condemned only to be exposed in the pillory, been killed by the mob; but of late  
more

more care has been taken that this might not happen again ; though I have reason to think, that these precautions were sometimes more owing to money which came from the delinquent, than to the regulations of the police. Those punishments which the English laws inflict, and which have the appearance of barbarity, are either greatly mitigated, or abolished. Treason and petty treason carry a severe death with them ; but a man who is to be executed for treason, is at present first hanged, before the rest of the sentence of the law takes place. A woman condemned to be burned is first strangled, and that species of barbarity, called *peine forte et dure*, which formerly was practised on a person that stood obstinately mute, and would not plead to an indictment of felony or of high treason, is at present entirely abolished. He that will, on such an occasion, not hold up his hand, as is usual, is now considered as convicted ; and it is settled by act of parliament, that standing mute shall be equivalent to conviction.

I shall add a few remarks on the English prisons. The philanthropic Mr. Howard has written on this subject in general, so amply, and his publications are so well known in Germany, that I may refer those who want to be better

better informed, to the accounts which he has given. The English gaols are very numerous, and I believe in no European country more prisoners are kept than in England. Whether in former times there were fewer, and whether centuries ago that might have been applied to London, which Juvenal<sup>8</sup> says of ancient Rome, when the forefathers of his forefathers lived, I have some reason to doubt. It is said, in an act of parliament made under Henry VIII. that sixty thousand persons and above, were then prisoners in the kingdom for debts and crimes; and seventy-two thousand criminals were executed during that reign for theft and robberies<sup>9</sup>. Indeed, if this be really fact, the times must have certainly mended, and we have no reason to complain violently against the depravity of the present. They are wicked enough, but certainly not to be compared to what they were formerly; though the reformation of manners and criminals will never come up to the good police of the wise Alfred, who, as it is said, hung up by

<sup>8</sup> *Felices proavorum atavos, felicia dicas  
Sæcula, quæ quondam sub regibus atque tribunis,  
Viderunt uno contentam carcere Romam.*

Sat. iii. v. 312.

<sup>9</sup> HUME's Hist. of England, vol. iv. p. 275.

## 82 ON THE ENGLISH

way of bravado, golden bracelets, near the highways; and no man dared to touch them<sup>10</sup>. In our days, the daring ingenuity of English thieves would steal them, if they were fastened to a gibbet, and a watch placed near them. The state of English prisons, and the condition of prisoners has of late greatly mended, through the humane endeavours of Mr. Howard. Nevertheless, there is still great room for reformation, and such as is absolutely necessary. The prisons are stocked with felons and debtors. The latter class occupy one part of the prison separately, but the former, without regard to sex, age, or crimes, are kept promiscuously, to the great improvement of immorality. Old and hardened offenders are mixed together with those who are but just initiated into iniquity, and the latter improve very fast in all kinds of wickedness, by what they hear and see of the former, with whom they soon become more intimately connected. If they happen to be set at liberty again, they come out of prison much more hardened and instructed in all manner of vices than they went into it. When the late American war prevented felons from being transported to the English

<sup>10</sup> HUME's Hist. of England, vol. i. p. 96.

colonies, floating prisons were invented, under the denomination of hulks, where culprits are sentenced to hard labour, as it is called, which consists chiefly in ballast-heaving. I have seen them work on the Thames, but I doubt whether their labours can be called hard, since free men who do the same work for money, exert themselves abundantly more, and longer a day than those felons do. Since this punishment is limited to a certain time, they are set at liberty, when it is expired; but no provision being made for them, or means devised how they may get a livelihood in an honest way, they are let loose upon the public again, where they oftentimes begin their depredations a-new, and, being improved and hardened in the company, in which they have been kept, commit more enormous crimes, perhaps on the very day when they are dismissed, than they were guilty of before. Whoever reflects upon this mode of punishment, will be at loss how to reconcile it to the wisdom of a well regulated police. Indeed, I must say, that in Germany we manage these things better. As for those unfortunate beings, the prisoners for debt, they are much to be pitied. The prisons are full of them, and though what is called an act of insolvency opens, now and then, the doors of the

## 84 ON THE ENGLISH, &c.

prison, for those who are absolutely unable to pay, to be restored to liberty ; yet, on account of the great credit which is easily obtained, and the extravagance of living, which is the fashion, they soon fill again. Those who have left the prison, by means of an act of grace, oftentimes are obliged, either to return to it again, or to be maintained out of the poor's-rate, and thus become burthensome to the public. How much room is here for reformation, and for the exertion of a wise legislature !

## ON THE ARMY AND THE NAVY.

THE English are very justly of opinion, that standing armies are the grave-diggers of the liberty of a nation, whenever a despotically inclined prince can make use of them to bury the rights of mankind. For this reason the soldiery, according to the rigour of the English laws, are not to be considered as a distinct order in the community; and the British constitution knows no such state, as that of a perpetual standing soldier; but a citizen and a soldier shall be the same, as it was in the best times of the Roman republic. Even the kings of England had before Henry VII. no life-guards. In modern times something similar to a standing army has been introduced; but upon a very different footing from those of other countries. Parliament grants, every year, the sum required for maintaining the army, without which it could never subsist; and another act of parliament is yearly passed, to punish mutiny and desertion, and for the better payment of the army and their quarters. Without this act no martial law could be established, and nobody would be under any obligation to provide them quarters.

The British army may amount, in times of peace, to 40,000, in which number the garrisons in Ireland, Gibraltar, the West-Indies, and North America are included. In war time foreign troops are taken into pay, and petty foreign princes, particularly in Germany, are very ready to sell their good subjects, who foolishly submit to it, for English guineas; by which means the English army, in times of necessity, is frequently raised to 150,000 men. The militia in England is at present greatly changed from what it was in former times. It is reduced to 29,880 men, when even under James I. it was still rated at 160,000. The navy of Great Britain, since the times of Cromwell, is become so powerful, and so formidable, that a numerous militia is at present unnecessary for the defence of the country. The English fleets can prevent an invasion of the island better than the greatest number of troops, which never would be able to guard a coast of more than a thousand miles in circumference, if an enemy should attempt a landing. For this very reason, England stands in no need of fortresses, which besides may become formidable to the liberty of the nation; and the English may justly think themselves happy that they can do without them; though, of late, an expensive fortification

tion



tion plan, has been more than once proposed in parliament, but as often very properly rejected.

It may be said of the English troops in general, that they are good soldiers, and of great courage, particularly when they are well fed, and in no want of beef and strong beer. That the officers places in the army are sold, is justly to be censured, because many a youngster, who, perhaps, has more money in his pocket, than heroism in his heart, is placed over a deserving veteran, or a man of real military talents. It has given me, in my own country, much pain, when I have seen how severely, nay brutally, officers treat the soldiers; such ill usage is not very common in England. It seems as if a British soldier, even under a musket, was conscious of his being to be treated as an Englishman. The pay of an English soldier, is, considering the great dearth of living in England, very trifling, particularly when they are quartered either in or near London.

A powerful navy is an object of far greater consequence to England than an army. It is the best bulwark of the British empire, and is, therefore, not cramped with such restrictions as the army, nor subjected to laws

that are the result of jealous liberty, which cannot be endangered by the navy. For this very reason no annual acts of parliament are required for keeping it up, and the marine department is looked upon as one that is established for ever. The English navy began to be respectable ever since the twelfth century, though it bore not the most distant comparison to what it is at present. Sir Edward Coke thought England had reason to boast of the strength of her navy, during the reign of queen Elizabeth, when the whole consisted only of thirty-three ships of war; but what would he have said, had he lived in the present times, when Great Britain counts between 110 and 120 ships of the line, and all her ships of war amount to almost 500. They carry not much less than 14000 guns<sup>1</sup>, which can make noise enough in the world, and through whose mouths the English may speak in a very decisive tone to other nations, when they differ from them in opinion, about matters of political interest,

<sup>1</sup> Hume, in Hist. of England, vol. v. p. 481. whose statement of the English navy in the times of queen Elizabeth, differs from that, before mentioned of sir Edward Coke, says, that at her death the navy consisted only of 42 ships, which carried altogether no more than 772 guns. Only four ships, of 40 guns, were at that time in the navy, and none was of a higher rate.

national

national ambition, or supposed rights which have been violated.

The manning of the English navy requires, in time of war, from 60 to 80,000 sailors. These have either voluntarily engaged to serve on board, or they are pressed. The first receive a bounty, or premium on their engaging; the latter are taken by force. A number of ten or more sailors, with an officer in the navy at their head, which are called a press-gang, go, armed with cudgels and cutlasses, through the streets. They enter public houses, and such as bear not a good name; and whatever persons they meet, in the day or night-time, whom they think fit to become sailors, they take hold of without ceremony. Appeals however may be made, if improper persons are taken, to the regulating captains, or to the lords of the admiralty; and the friends of any impressed man, if they know where he is, and can afford the expence, may cause him to be brought by writ of *habeas corpus*, before the judges, who have a power to discharge him, if he has not been at sea, or is not a proper person for the service. This business of impressing is not always transacted without fighting or bloodshed. When the press is hot, they will row up and down the Thames in boats,  
board

board the merchant-ships, and strip them of their sailors. Violent battles, and even murder, will sometimes happen on such occasions. I do not know how this impressing of sailors can be reconciled to that liberty, and personal security, of which the English are apt to boast. If only idle people, and such as are single, were impressed and forced to suffer themselves to be maimed or killed, as it is said, for the good of their country, some specious excuses, perhaps, might be found for such infringements of right and liberty; but when industrious fathers, as is often the case, are torn from their wives and their family, whose only support they were; when the poor mother, in such instances, surrounded with three or four children, is obliged to go begging, it is impossible that humanity should not ask with astonishment, How a nation can pride itself on the rights and liberty of the meanest of its individuals, when, in times of war, such things happen so frequently? The cries of the oppressed are loud; complaints of patriots on this subject are made before the publick; friends to mankind propose plans to remedy this evil; but, it continues notwithstanding<sup>2</sup>. In the reign

<sup>2</sup> In queen Elizabeth's reign it was even worse than now. Hume, at *supra*, p. 459.

of William III. an act of parliament was made to register 30,000 seamen. They were to enjoy great privileges, but be subject to heavy punishments, if in time of war, when called upon, they did not appear immediately. This act, however, was repealed in queen Anne's time, under pretence, that such an engagement was a kind of slavery. Some years ago it was proposed, that every parish should be obliged, by act of parliament, to deliver, every year, a stipulated number of boys, to be distributed in merchant ships, that they afterwards might serve on board king's ships. There are above twelve thousand parishes in England and Scotland. If each of them furnished yearly two boys of twelve years each, the number of them would within ten years amount to 240,000. Supposing 100,000 of them died, and 60,000 were under the age of eighteen, there would remain a naval militia of 80,000 young sailors, which might be yearly recruited in the most easy manner from those growing up to maturity. At present, they who are pressed by force are carried on board a tender, which, in fact, is a floating prison, where they are kept till it is so crowded, that they are in danger of being suffocated, before they

they are delivered up to a man of war. How many acts of injustice and cruelty, on such occasions happen, is well known in London, and in other sea-port towns in the kingdom. If the contradictions in human actions, and in the modes of thinking among men, were not so frequent and so conspicuous, it might appear almost incredible, that people who are forced against their wills, and in such a manner, into the sea-service, should behave, notwithstanding, with so much bravery and courage, and perform such deeds as the English sailors generally do; for I believe that very near half of those who serve on board of the king's ships are impressed.

The English navy owes its strength chiefly to the British commerce, which produces so many able seamen, and to the navigation-act. The coal trade from Newcastle to London, the commerce with the West-India islands, and the remaining colonies in North America, together with the British fisheries, particularly that of Newfoundland, are looked upon as nurseries of British sailors, by whom the dignity and power of the British navy is kept up. As most of the raw materials for building ships, and fitting them out, are brought from foreign coun-

countries, it is easily to be conceived, that it must be very expensive to the nation to maintain a respectable navy. Even in times of peace, more than two millions are granted by parliament for its support.

There are, besides others, two fine hospitals near London for invalids of the navy and army. The first is at Greenwich, the other at Chelsea. Both are noble buildings, and kept very neat, and in good order. The number of sailors and soldiers, who are maimed or crippled in the service of their country, and maintained in these hospitals, is but small, when compared with the whole British navy and army; but it must be remembered, that the number of out-pensioners oftentimes exceeds those who are received within the walls of these extensive buildings. I am informed, that after a war, those who are supported by these hospitals, under the denomination of out-pensioners, frequently amount to more than ten thousand. Each of them receives annually not quite eight pounds sterling for his support, which, indeed, seems to be but very little; but it is supposed, that those who are out-pensioners are not so disabled as to be incapable of doing something towards their own maintenance. The fund, or sum, which

which is annually required for supporting these hospitals and invalids, is chiefly raised from the trifling deductions made in paying the navy and the army. Each officer, each sailor or soldier, is to leave a trifle from each pound he receives, besides the pay of a whole day in the year. This altogether amounts to a considerable sum, though in war-time, when the number of the wounded increases, it is by no means sufficient. In these cases, parliament grants the deficiencies out of the public money. Humanity, which, however, is never the cause of wars and invalids, demands such institutions; and reasons of state and policy render them absolutely necessary. In England, they may be said to be splendid, and suitable to the dignity of the nation; but yet they are justly censured for fixing the salaries of the governors and officers, belonging to these national institutions, too high, and granting too little to the poor soldiers and sailors, who are maimed in the defence of their country, and fighting battles against its enemies. Moreover, these places are frequently given to generals and officers of a considerable rank, who enjoy other places under government, or are opulent themselves. They might, indeed, be contented with smaller  
fala-



salaries, or be appointed to such posts for mere honour's sake, without enjoying large incomes, which mostly originate from the deductions made from the small pay of a soldier or a sailor. This observation is in a greater degree applicable to Greenwich hospital than to that at Chelsea.

ON THE NATIONAL DEBT  
AND TAXES.

THERE is no country in Europe, which is more heavily burdened with taxes than England. The very light which falls through the windows, and which in London, during the winter, is mixed with no small portion of darkness, must be paid for. Excise and custom-house duties are without number. The demands of government, and the national debt, have, within these twenty years, so much increased, that the inventive powers of the ministers of finances, seemed frequently to be at a stand, as if they were exhausted. For this reason, many of the old taxes from necessity have been doubled, nay some trebled, though the event has proved, that the mines were not always so rich, as to become twice or three times proportionably productive, to answer the demands and the expectations of the minister.

The English taxes may be divided into three classes. The demands of government stand first, the provincial taxes or county-rates follow, and the church and poor's rate fill up the rear. The peace establishment, together with  
the

The civil list, amount yearly to full five millions, and the interest for the national debt, is, at present, something more than nine. The county rates, or provincial taxes, in England only, are reckoned at five millions; the income of the established church, with the tithes, is said to amount to three millions<sup>3</sup>, and the poor's rate above two millions, if not three. Hence it appears, that the English are to raise annually twenty-five millions in taxes of different kinds; and supposing the whole amount of the current specie, in Great Britain and Ireland, to be twenty-five millions, it is evident, that this sum circulates yearly, in paying duties and taxes. Bank notes and bills of exchange, are, therefore, absolutely necessary; and it is astonishing how the times have altered within less than two centuries. In the reign of queen Elizabeth, the current specie of the kingdom was computed at four millions only, and a shilling in England went as far as two shillings in France, which is the very reverse of the case at present<sup>4</sup>. Yet, is there any doubt, that the people of England in those times were full as happy as in ours, when the necessities both of the state and of individuals, are so enormously increased?

<sup>3</sup> Some will allow but half this sum.

<sup>4</sup> HUME's Hist. of England, vol. v. p. 485.

The English nation was then, without a bank, and with only four millions of specie, as much respected as at any other period, recorded hitherto in the annals of its history.

Luxury, pretended refinements of life, together with a number of expensive wars, some of which were certainly not of the utmost necessity, have increased the wants of the nation, and with them the public debts, taxes, and burdens. When government first began the borrowing scheme, five, nay even six *per cent.* were paid as interest. The creditors were not permitted to reclaim their capital; but they were allowed to sell the whole or part of it, to whom they pleased, by which means these debts, vulgarly called *stocks*, became a kind of merchandise, saleable as goods in the market. The plan of making a fund of public debts, is of Italian or Florentine invention, improved only and stretched to the utmost in England. What Leonard Aretin said of the bank or stocks of Florence, in the fourteenth century, that they rose according to circumstances, and were regulated by fear, hope, and speculations, is applicable in all respects to the English funds. The scenes of roguery in the stock-market, the impositions which are daily committed, to make the public funds rise or fall, are beyond concep-

ception, and the credulity with which every idle story, and every palpable lie is swallowed, stands as a melancholy proof of the weakness and imbecility of the human mind.

It is calculated that the English, within the space of about a century, have spent no less than forty-five years in wars. They are very expensive among all nations, but certainly more to the English than any other, which may easily be accounted for, from the manner in which the estimates and subsidies are made; from the mode in which they are granted, and afterwards spent. When king William died, the national debt amounted to little more than sixteen millions, and is risen now to more than two hundred and fifty. It became an established maxim with the ministers of state, who were so happy as to be placed at the head of the treasury, to borrow millions after millions, upon the credit of the parliament, without ever entertaining an idea of repaying their loans. They thought it fully sufficient to provide for the interest required, by laying on new taxes, and generously left the rest to posterity. The millions thus borrowed, remain in the treasury as long as water in a sieve, and become, within a twelvemonth, a mere phantom in the funds. The nation pays, as long

as it is able, the interest of its debts, and since it is an absolute impossibility to pay them off, it must declare itself, one time or other, insolvent. The word bankruptcy has lost in this enlightened age the terrors of ignominy, which the prejudice of former times had annexed to it. Every London Gazette announces bankrupts twice a week, by half dozens and dozens, and every body looks upon them as common things. Should it, therefore, excite much wonder, if the nation itself found it necessary to declare its situation by means of a *Whereas* &c.? To speak, however, seriously, neither agriculture, nor commerce, will cease in England, because several thousands who lead an idle life, by means of their income from the public funds, will be under a necessity, when the bubble of credit bursts, to apply to some beneficial employments, and to become useful members of society. Most of this kind of people live at the expence, and upon the labour of the more industrious part of the nation, and in some respects rob them of their own<sup>s</sup>. Nay, it might even be said, that the general-

<sup>s</sup> Celui qui mange dans l'oïveté ce qu'il n'a pas gagné lui même, le vole; et un rentier qui l'état paye pour ne rien faire ne diffère guère à mes yeux d'un brigand qui vit aux dépenses des passans. ROUSSEAU *Emile*, tom. ii. p. 74-  
There is certainly some truth in this.

ity of them are supported and fed by government out of the public funds, for which reason they are almost always satisfied with the measures it pleases to adopt. They look upon it as their tutelar goddesses, without being anxious for the support of constitutional liberty, or caring for the burdens laid upon the more industrious part of the nation. Liberty, therefore, cannot but gain, if such a revolution in the British finances should take place, which certainly is unavoidable. Those millions which now are to be raised to pay the interest of such an exorbitant national debt must then cease ; or, if a composition should take place, they must be lessened, and every necessary of life must become more reasonable. Agriculture, manufactures, commerce, will flourish more, if the industrious man pays in taxes, only one third to government of what he is to spend in support of himself and his family, instead of paying at present actually more than half. England then will see more happy times ; she will commence a new epocha in her history, which will have again its spring, its summer, its autumn, till at last, if posterity renews the game of its ancestors, after a century or two more are elapsed, a new bankruptcy will ensue, and a cold winter shall destroy those insects again, which feed upon the fruits that properly belong to

the industrious. There is no new thing under the sun; changeable time alters and restores many things,

Multa dies, variusque labor mutabilis ævi,  
Retulit in melius; multos alterna revifens  
Lufit, et in folido rurfus fortuna locavit:

VIRGIL.

it alters the state of nations as well as that of private men.

The English funds have been long ago looked upon as uncertain; and those who buy in, do it always on a fupposition that they can fell out again, if any danger fhould prefent itfelf. Yet, hitherto, both Britifh fubjects and foreigners, have not hefitated to place their money in them, becaufe the confidence in the riches of the nation has been great, and the intereft or dividends have been paid, hitherto, very regularly, without any deduction whatever. Befides, if any body wants the whole or part of his capital back again, to difpofe of it otherwife, he can fell out almoft whenever he pleafes, without trouble, fubmitting only to the variations of the market price. Thefe are undoubtedly great conveniences, which thofe feldom meet with that lend out their money to individuals, or on common or perfonal fecurity. The intereft of the creditor is like-  
wife



wise secure as long as the taxes are sufficiently productive, and government can send the necessary millions to the bank for the payment of the half yearly dividends. But should the time come, when it is not able to do this, or is obliged in time of war to appropriate the money, which was intended to pay the creditors their interest, to the necessary expences of the state, the credit then is gone, at least for a short time, and the national bankruptcy is declared. I have seen Englishmen who cannot, or will not persuade themselves of the possibility that such an event, not only might, but, at last, must happen, and think, that all England would be undone, if it should ever take place. They, however, do not consider, that the number of those who have money in the funds, is calculated at 25,000; that about 17,000 are said to be British subjects, the rest foreigners, and that comparing these with the whole of the inhabitants of Great Britain and Ireland, which are reckoned at about twelve millions, the number of sufferers, if the state should become insolvent, is, comparatively speaking, but very small. Besides, it does not follow, that in case the state cannot raise, by taxes, ten millions to pay the interest due to the creditors, that a total insolvency should

ensue. Supposing that even no more than six millions, without overburdening the nation, could annually be raised, to satisfy the creditors in paying their dividends, they ought to be satisfied with that, and every one of them, I believe, would in such an instance, readily submit to a composition. Each creditor of the state would lose in proportion, so much of the capital of which he is possessed in the funds, as would reduce the whole of the national debt to such a standard, that six millions, annually raised by taxes, would be sufficient to pay the interest. Every man in his senses, may easily convince himself, that it is an absolute impossibility ever to pay off this enormous national debt; and I do not know, whether it would not be the best means that an enterprising minister could adopt, to do the nation an essential service, if he, with the consent of parliament, declared the insolvency, and proposed a composition. By such a measure, he would ease millions of a grievous burthen, he would dispel the anxieties of thousands, he would relieve the industrious, and bring those who live in idleness and affluence, at the labour and expence of others, to a greater degree of equality with the rest of the community. There is no ground for apprehension, that such a method  
of

of reducing the national debt would annihilate the credit of government. Not the three hundred thousandth part of the subjects of Great-Britain have any concern in the public funds; and those who have but little in them, would be indemnified for their loss, by the reduction of taxes, and, in consequence, of the dearth of living. Those who live in affluence from their income out of the public funds, would derive the same advantage, and have, perhaps, sufficiently left, to live in a decent manner, though their capital, and consequently their interest, were reduced to two thirds or one half only, of what they had before<sup>6</sup>. Foreigners, who have interest in the British funds, would have no more reason to complain than others.

<sup>6</sup> There is another way of easing the nation of its burden, without suffering its pensioners to be starved. If the buying and selling of the funds was unexpectedly stopped at once, and all the annuities were gradually to terminate with the lives of the then proprietors, whose names are actually on the books in the Bank, every death of such a person would bring relief to the state, and the national debt might be very nearly extinguished within twenty or thirty years. It ought, however, to be confessed, that such a way of clearing the nation has the appearance of hardship, more than the other which I have mentioned; though, in fact, it would only resemble the suppression of convents and monasteries, when their inhabitants are provided for during their lives, but after their deaths the cells are not filled up again.

They

They get in their own countries, if they are not in a mercantile line, seldom more for their money, when it is lent upon good security, than three *per cent.* and in the English funds they get at present seldom less than four. Besides, it ought to be considered, that the English nation loses every year, more than two millions, which are to be gained by English industry, and are sent abroad to satisfy the demands of foreigners, who in case of a composition for reducing the national debt, ought to share of course the fate of other creditors, if they happen to be among their number.

Many schemes have been proposed, to pay off the national debt, but always without any effect. At present, since it is arrived to such an alarming height, it seems to border upon frenzy, for any man to think seriously of a possibility of doing it. Had the original intention of the sinking fund been rigorously pursued, things would never have gone so far as they are. But, instead of that, reckoning from the accession of queen Anne, the nation has within eighty-seven years, contracted two hundred thirty-four millions of debt. Is it possible to think, that by a progressive and proportionable accumulation, a national insolvency can be thirty years distant? It is true, that  
some

some millions have been paid off in times of peace; but the whole from the accession of George I. to the year 1785, amounted to no more than 21,652,000. There is no doubt, that above three times that sum, has dropped into the sinking fund; but the rapacious hands of ministers have alienated and applied it to quite different, nay, even opposite purposes, than to relieve the nation from those enormous burdens under which it groans. There is likewise no hope, that it ever will be otherwise, if parliament makes no severer laws, and does not enforce them by the strictest regulations, to protect a fund which should have been held sacred, and ought to have been most conscientiously applied. However, this would come now too late, since not much can be saved as an overplus of the revenues, and attempts have been made, even in parliament, to prove, that the national expenditure exceeds the income considerably. But supposing that there was a possibility of paying off, in times of peace, a million annually, what could it avail, if one war increases the debt, with more than an hundred and ten millions? The credulous, indeed, are made to believe, that a million is yearly paid off; but others consider this as a delusion and a farce. Foreigners must really wonder,

that

that whilst this reduction of the debt is boasted of, new millions are borrowed, and the people, instead of being relieved, are burdened with new taxes.

As for the taxes themselves, they are almost endless. Some are called annual, such as the land and malt-tax ; but custom and necessity, has established them in such a manner, that they may be considered as perpetual, full as well as the others. They do not always answer the expectations of the minister, they entail want and misery upon the poor, and call loud enough, *Ne plus ultra* ; or stretch the bow no farther, for it is going to break ! When first a tax is laid on, some grumbling and some discontent is, perhaps, heard in the beginning ; but when it is once established, no body seems to mind it any more. There is no nation, which talks, writes, and boasts more of liberty than the English, and yet there is none more burdened with taxes, duties, and excise, all which it bears patiently, though excise is certainly inconsistent with the government of a free people. In the beginning of the American war, I have oftentimes heard the English say : the Americans ought to be subdued, because they would not submit to pay taxes, as well as they themselves, in order to ease the burden of the nation.

nation. They consequently knew, and were sensible of the hardships under which they laboured ; but wished, notwithstanding, for coercion, to make the Americans likewise oppressed with the evils of which they themselves complained. To obtain this end, they submitted to be loaded from time to time with new impositions, to furnish the interest for the new loans, and with more than an hundred and ten millions of new debts, which have been accumulated in that fruitless war.

Much might be said of the manner in which the taxes are laid on. I have heard it frequently mentioned in favour of them, that they are optional ; but, I believe, there are some, which are not. The commutation-tax, for instance, is one of them, since whoever is to pay for his windows, must pay the duty upon tea likewise, though he, perhaps, never drinks or buys any. This commutation-tax may be looked upon as a companion to that odious impost in France upon salt, called *gabelle*. It has farther the appearance as if in England, in laying on taxes, not sufficient regard was paid to the different classes of people, and their circumstances. The rich, when compared to the poor, pay too little, though it reflects honour on the English legislation, that neither the nobility, nor any  
body

body else, are exempted from paying their share, towards every tax, which receives the sanction of parliament. In Germany, France, and most European countries, the nobility and the Romish clergy have taken care to exempt themselves from the greatest part of those impositions, which the industrious and poorer class of the community are obliged to pay, frequently towards the support of the extravagance, pride, and folly of their despotical sovereigns. This is a melancholy remnant of feudal barbarity, happily abolished, long ago, in England. The reasons, however, why the middling and the poorer classes of people, are, in proportion, heavier loaded than the rich, is pretty evident. The members of parliament, are mostly people of fortune, and the taxes are laid on by them. A patriot in the house of commons has, with the rest, but one vote. When a duty is laid on soap and candles, consent is easily obtained, but when a tax on dogs and packs of hounds is proposed, the minister will find a strong opposition. There is likewise some truth in what an honest Englishman asserted in a pamphlet written not many years ago: "That dissipation and vice are winked at by government, and the morals of the people are sacrificed to the increase of the  
 "revenue."



## DEBT AND TAXES. 111

“revenue?” Indeed, whoever reflects on the encouragement given to tea-drinking, to annual lotteries, to numberless distilleries, taverns, and alehouses, might be induced to think, that this assertion is not altogether without foundation.

Since the imposts, which are collected as duties, taxes, or excise, are so various, it is obvious, that numbers of tax-gatherers, excisemen, and custom-house officers, commissioners, &c. are necessary, whose salaries and perquisites amount to great sums. It has, therefore, frequently been proposed, to reduce all taxes, if possible, into one, or at least to simplify and reduce them to a few. The poor would gain by such regulations, if their situation in life, and their inability of contributing much, were consulted, and the number of revenue-officers was lessened. However, all these well-intended proposals have been neglected. The poor contribute greatly towards the revenue, and government has even an income from the large sums which the nation raises to maintain its poor. The minister wants the revenue officers as his own creatures, to vote for his interest on elections, and though, within a few years, they

<sup>7</sup> Observations on the present state of the parochial and vagrant poor. London. 1773.

have been incapacitated by an act of parliament, to vote at parliamentary elections, yet it has been done formerly ; and it would be no matter of surprize, if a future minister, who could keep his place only by venality, bribery, and corruption, should find means to repeal this act, that he might procure to himself a parliament devoted to his dictates and to his interest. Nay, it is said, that ministers have laid on taxes, which they knew beforehand would not be productive, merely to increase their myrmidons, and to have more votes at command.

## OF THE PROVISION FOR THE POOR.

THE preceding section on taxes naturally leads me to mention another species of impost or public burthen; I mean the maintenance of the poor, whose number, on account of the high price of provisions, is excessively great. Concerning the dearth of provisions and the causes of it, I shall on some future occasion say more. There are in no country such large contributions raised for the support of the poor as in England; yet there is no where so great a number of them; and their condition, in comparison with the poor of other countries, appears truly the most miserable: they never seem to be apprehensive, or to think of making any provision for a time of want. In Germany and other northern countries of Europe, the poor keep always in mind that it is cold in winter, and that no harvest or fruits can be reaped from the earth while it is covered with snow. On this account they consider in time the warmer cloathing they will then require, and lay up such a store of provisions

as their circumstances allow, in order to prepare themselves in the best manner possible for the inclemency of that season. But in England it seems as if the poor and necessitous never looked forward, or would not trouble themselves to think of what may happen to them in future. They neither foresee the winter's cold, nor the scarcity of that season; and, therefore, when it arrives, are the most forlorn beings imaginable. The lower classes of people have no disposition to be frugal or provident: when trade becomes dull and employment scanty, they who maintained themselves by their labour, must either beg or obtain support for themselves and their families from the parish. The watermen of the Thames, whose gains are very sufficient for their livelihood, when the river is frozen or covered with shoals of ice, are often seen dragging a boat or little ship through the streets of London, and begging alms of the public. In those counties and towns where manufactures are carried on, there is for this very reason the greatest number of poor; for as soon as any particular branch of them is on the decline, the workmen who were employed in it are threatened with want, and in danger of starving. The number of the poor in such counties raises the poor-rates very high,

high, and consequently makes both land and houses less eligible to purchase; for according to the value or rent of houses, the poor-rates are levied; so that the tenant of a middling house, of about forty pounds yearly rent, in a county where four shillings in the pound are demanded, for the support of the poor, must pay a yearly tax of eight pounds for poor-rates.

In Germany there is a great difference, as to value, between the dresses of the different ranks of people; but in England this distinction holds in a much smaller degree. The cloathing manufactured for the poor and common people, is in small proportion to their number, and few or none of them like to wear it. Even in country places it is but little used; and in London, or the great towns, it is seldom or never to be seen. All do their best to wear fine clothes, and those who cannot purchase them new buy the old at second-hand, that they may at least have the appearance of finery. Servants in general live nearly as well as their masters and mistresses; and when servant-men or maids marry, they frequently begin the married state with a life of more expence, or rather profusion, than their circumstances will admit, and continue the same until children and want force them to

apply for bread to their parish. The English thieves and rogues usually say, "We can be "but hanged at last." In like manner servants and others, who by their extravagance and mismanagement bring poverty upon themselves, feel as little contrition, and say, "The "parish must maintain us." Such instances, however, of worthlessness and depravity, render the wealthy and industrious not very willing to contribute to the support of the poor; and the poor themselves generally thank neither God nor man for the charity that feeds them.

The number of those who are born poor, and of those who from misfortune or misconduct become so in time, is very great. The first are brought up by charities; the latter are maintained, and at last buried out of the same fund. No person, therefore, need wonder that the taxes which are yearly collected under act of parliament, for the support of the poor, should in England alone amount to three millions sterling: a sum which must appear altogether extraordinary, when it is considered, that the revenues of many kingdoms do hardly, by

<sup>1</sup> Sir John Sinclair, in his History of the Public Revenue of the British Empire, page 115, speaking of the poor-rate, says, "A grievous burthen, which, it is supposed, amounts "at present to at least three millions *per ann.*"

half,

half, amount to so much <sup>2</sup>. At the same time it ought to be remembered, that the extremely necessitous poor only are supported by it; that the streets of London, notwithstanding all this, are crowded with beggars; that the poor blind, led by dogs, beg charity, and that this is equally the case, in proportion, in the country <sup>3</sup>.

If we may not presume that the funds for the poor are mismanaged and misapplied, we shall never be able to account for the number of beggars in England, or reconcile the contradiction which strikes us, while we view the country every where covered with the seats of the noble and the rich, and at the same time so many poor persons half naked and starving around them.

Some years ago a small treatise was published, entitled, "Observations on the Poor-

<sup>2</sup> According to Busching, the geographer, the revenues of the kingdom of Denmark are six millions of thalers, which answers to one million of pounds sterling; and those of Sweden amount hardly to a million and a half, English money. With half of the provision of the poor in England, therefore, whole realms, crowns, armies, navies, and other expences of the state, are supported! How much matter is here for an arithmetician, a financier, and a philosophic observer!

<sup>3</sup> It is inconceivable to me how the author of the book *Londres*, after having been here, could write thus:—"Londres n'a point de pauvres—en bannissant la mendicité, etc." vol. I. p. 112.

## 118 OF THE PROVISION

“ Laws, on the Present State of the Poor,  
“ and on Houses of Industry, by R. Potter,  
“ London, 1775.” It is well written, and  
gives full and pointed intelligence on the sub-  
ject. Alfred the Great ordered his clergy to  
take the care of the poor upon themselves,  
and, incredible as it may appear to the finan-  
ciers of the present day, he gave up one half  
of his revenues for the support of the poor, and  
one fourth part as a provision for the old and de-  
crepit. The present laws, for the maintenance of  
the poor, originated in the reign of Elizabeth.  
It was then enacted, that the churchwardens and  
two or three of the most respectable inhabitants  
of every parish, annually to be chosen, should  
together inspect the management of the affairs  
of the indigent. They were to see the chil-  
dren of the poor put to work, and employ-  
ment found for those who were unable to  
maintain themselves through want of it.  
These overseers were authorised to lay a  
tax on the parish, for the support of the  
poor and disabled; to send their children to  
school, and punish all who were able, but too  
lazy, to work. They were empowered, also,  
to make contracts with the proprietors of  
lands, for the building of alms and other  
houses for the poor. These rules had, at first,  
a very



a very good effect, but coming, through time, to be very imperfectly observed, the overseers at length turned out little better, in general, than petty tyrants over the poor. The work-houses of a parish are frequently let to persons, who, by means of a contract for that purpose, take the charge of providing for the poor upon themselves; and, in order to derive undue advantages from it, deal so unjustly with them, that the poor prefer begging in the streets to the treatment they receive in their workhouses. Whoever, by reading the treatise above-cited, and by observation of daily occurrences, becomes sensible of the want of humanity in many of these overseers, and of the condition the poor are in themselves, will be at a loss what to think of the charitable institutions of a nation, which thinks so highly, and, in some respects, justly boasts of its generosity and humanity, and amongst whom so many splendid and costly buildings are destined for the relief of the indigent, the sick, and the unfortunate. Such frequent instances occur, of poor persons dying through want, nakedness, and hunger, that their unfeeling overseers might justly be arraigned at the bar of humanity, for the murder of their fellow-creatures.

It is supposed, that a million of poor people are maintained at the public expence; but I should think there were a great many more: their number increases every year. From a very accurate calculation, made in the year 1680, it appears, that the annual sum, requisite to provide for the poor, amounted to 665,392 pounds sterling. In the year 1764, it had risen to upwards of 1,200,000 pounds; and, in the year 1773, it exceeded, as before-mentioned, three millions; but even this sum was not sufficient for the purpose. In the above quoted treatise, there is an account given of a workhouse, erected within these few years for the poor, in the county of Norfolk, which plainly shews how much the poor-rates may be reduced; the poor themselves better taken care of; more liberally supported, and made useful to the public, by due regulations being observed. It is surprising that this example, so worthy of imitation, has not been followed by other counties. Admitting that there are ten thousand parishes in England, and in each parish a workhouse, containing twenty poor; if we suppose, that each individual, by work found him, could earn four-pence a day, this labour would annually produce, if they worked

worked only three hundred days, one million sterling.

Mr. Gee, who appears to be no greater a statesman than a friend to humanity, made, some years ago, a proposal to send all the poor to the colonies. I rather think, that in a few years, if the times do not mend, whoever can pay their passage there, will, without waiting for an act of parliament, ship themselves to America. The rich will then be able to judge whether they can do without the poor; and unless great emigrations should take place, England will, in time, consist of two ranks of people only; of the rich, and of beggars; or, in other words, of masters and slaves.

Whoever pursues these reflections on the establishment made for the poor, and the sum necessary for their support in England, will soon be led to think how much the wealth of the nation is ideal and imaginary, and how unequally what they really possess is distributed. Allowing there are seven millions of people in England, one million is so poor it must be supported by the rest: that four millions earn only as much as is requisite for their necessities; granting, also, that without reckoning any individual to be possessed of more than one thousand pounds, one million has  
five

five hundred pounds each, and the other one thousand each, and then ask where are these fifteen-hundred millions of pounds sterling to be found? How unequally is wealth divided! how ideal must it be, when there are scarcely twenty-five millions of coin to be counted in the kingdom! But it is with property in money as it is with that of land; not one in a thousand has twenty paces of his own; yet we all find room enough for our graves.

——— *Æqua tellus*

*Pauperi recluditur*

*Regumque pueris.*

*Hor. Carm. lib. II. Od. xviii. v. 32.*

People who live on the continent, when they see a traveller who speaks either good or broken English, generally suppose him to be a Briton, whose pockets are lined plentifully with money. They bow to him, and make him pay, if an opportunity offers, accordingly. But I can assure my countrymen, if what I have said before has not already altered their opinion, that there are numbers of British-born subjects, such as the inhabitants of some of the western islands, who are unacquainted with any coin; nay, others, who, perhaps, during their whole lives, never tasted  
a morsel

a morsel of bread. An old man, from one of the Orkneys, arrived on the northern coast of Scotland, and tasting there some bread, which he found, according to his palate, very delicious, cried out, "Oh! how luxuriously the people live here!" Is there any one, even of the poorest, in Germany, of whom the same could be said, as of this old man, who, in all probability, had gone through life as happily as many London epicureans, and grown old, without those distempers that attend luxury. He, according to his way of living, hardly stood a chance of becoming a beggar; and even as such, he could not be very burthensome to his community.

I am almost of opinion with Dr. Franklin, that this enormous sum, collected annually for the poor in England, increases their number as well as their wretchedness, and that, perhaps, it might be for the benefit of the nation, if poor-rates were entirely abolished, and the distribution of charities left to every man's own discretion.

## ON THE STATE OF POPULATION IN ENGLAND.

MUCH has been written, and many disputes have arisen within these few years, concerning the number of inhabitants in England; whether it is decreasing or increasing. Patriots, or at least those who are called so, have lamented for many years past, that population has been in a state of decrease; whereas, on the other side, persons have not been wanting, who have contended that it has within these eighty years greatly increased. Dr. Goldsmith, in a poem called *The Deserted Village*, sometime ago described the state of the kingdom as very deplorable, and asserted, that the number of inhabitants was diminishing, by the devastations which a daily increasing luxury occasioned, and by the frequent and numerous emigrations to America. His strains are very flowing, his descriptions animated, and the scenes which were painted by his muse very affecting; but I believe, few, if any, arising out of those causes, which he assigns as the sources of his pathetic complaints, are to be met with in England. What the poet had lamented in elegant rhimes,

Dr.

Dr. Price <sup>4</sup> endeavoured afterwards to prove by calculations. Mr. Eden <sup>5</sup>, (now lord Auckland), Mr. Wales <sup>6</sup>, and the rev. Mr. Howlet <sup>7</sup>, have endeavoured to refute him; and, as some have thought, with success, though others have intimated, that their intention was only to prove, for the benefit of those who wish for an augmentation of the state revenues, taxes, and duties, that the decrease of population was a mere chimera, which haunted the joyless imagination of some speculative men in the kingdom. This seems to me as improbable, as another assertion, that the imagination of the antagonists of Dr. Price was haunted by expectations of rewards and emoluments from the administration of that period, and that they were thereby led to search for proofs of those things which they wished to be true. Whoever will examine, with some attention, the facts and calculations, which both parties have produced, to prove their opposite assertions, will find arguments on both sides, which

<sup>4</sup> An Essay on the population of England, &c. London. 1780. Second Edition.

<sup>5</sup> Letters to Lord Carlisle. London, 1780. Third Edit.

<sup>6</sup> An Enquiry into the present State of Population in England and Wales, &c. London, 1781.

<sup>7</sup> An Examination of Dr. Price's Essay on the Population of England and Wales, &c. 1781.

will

will keep his judgment in suspense; and he will agree with me in opinion, that an exact calculation of the inhabitants, instituted by government over the whole kingdom, would be the only certain method of settling this dispute. This might easily be done, if a week were fixed upon, in which every parish was to number its inhabitants, under the inspection of the clergyman, or of some magistrate, and if the result were afterwards sent in to an office, appointed by government, where the accounts of the enumerations over the whole kingdom should be received. Why no administration has ever given such an order, or why no act of parliament has been passed for that purpose, though it would be extremely beneficial in calculations and estimates relative to finances, is a thing which appears to me rather extraordinary; and which has almost the appearance, that the ministers of state are apprehensive that an exact enumeration of the people would not answer their expectations, and by no means confirm the arguments which their political writers have advanced in favour of an increased population. Something of the kind has been, if I may so express it, done tacitly within these few years; for I have been told, that



those trifling taxes on the registering of christenings and burials, which have almost the appearance of a national dishonour, were invented and laid on, merely to ascertain, with some degree of probability, the true state of population in the kingdom. 'But why might not this be done publicly? Why are far-fetched arguments to be used, when an order for a general enumeration might silence at once those who are said to draw gloomy pictures of the population and of the prosperity of the kingdom?

The causes which Dr. Price alleges for a decrease of population, carry plausibility along with them; though it cannot be denied, that his opponents are not much behind hand with him. He proves, from the best authorities, that in the year 1690, there were in England and Wales together 1,319,215 houses. He reckons five inhabitants<sup>8</sup> to each of them, which, however, appears to him rather too much; and supposes the whole to have been, at that time, about six millions and a half. In the year 1777, the number of houses, which did and did not pay the window-tax amounted

<sup>8</sup> If, on an average, six were reckoned, it would perhaps come nearer the mark. On the continent we allow generally seven millions of inhabitants to England and Wales, which I think is the most probable number.

to 952,734, or, as Dr. Price fixes it, to a million. If here again five persons are reckoned for each house, the population has decreased a million and a half, since the year 1690. Mr. Wales takes great pains to refute what the doctor has advanced upon the population of London, and yet the reasonings of the latter remain, after all, apparently strong. Those arguments which Dr. Price derives from the decrease of the excise upon necessaries of life, and the increase of the imposts laid upon articles of luxury, are such, that all the subtle and elegant reasoning of the author of the letters to lord Carlisle, will hardly shake, and much less overthrow them.

The accounts of a great increase of houses in several counties in England, which the two antagonists of Dr. Price oppose to his assertion of a decrease of population, are liable to many objections. I shall mention only a few. In the first place, the increase of houses, on which Mr. Wales lays great stress, is mostly to be met with in Yorkshire and in Lancashire; where, for years past, manufactories have been established, and where of course the number of houses has increased. In the second place, it might be very justly observed, that if in some counties the number of houses had increased

creased and in others not diminished, the accounts, which are yearly presented to the royal exchequer by the commissioners of the window-lights must be untrue; for they prove, according to Dr. Price, that the number of houses is decreasing. It might, therefore, if the doctor's statement be just, very properly be asked, Whether the accounts given by Mr. Wales, or those delivered into the exchequer by the commissioners, are the most to be credited? In the third place, I think it might be readily admitted, that the cottages have decreased, but that the number of houses which pay the window-tax has increased, particularly in those counties where manufactories are successfully established. In cottages, which are exempt from the window-tax, lived perhaps more than one family, and some of them being employed in manufactories got a little money. Encouraged by this they quitted their poorer habitations, and took small houses which are not exempted from paying the window-tax, and which were erected by those people who build upon speculation. This, indeed, proves the increase of houses which pay the window-tax, and that some poor people have got a little more money than they had before; but it hardly can be used as an argument for the increase of population, and

the increase of families. If, therefore, an advocate for an increased population says, that in the year 1756, the number of houses in the north riding of Yorkshire had been 1716, but was at present 1985, and from thence draws the inference, that, within five and twenty years, this part of Yorkshire had an addition of 269 families, an inattentive reader might be easily misled by substituting new families for new houses, since it is not mentioned how many cottages were left empty by exchanging them for houses, though the former are more beneficial to population than palaces.

From the enormous increase of houses, which to a degree almost approaching to madness, are continually, within these twenty years, erecting near London, no inferences neither, on the general increase of the population in the kingdom, can be drawn. It may be true, that the metropolis, to its own detriment, has somewhat increased in the number of its inhabitants; but since, perhaps, the smallest part of this increase consists of persons born in London, these new inhabitants must have come from some where else, and most of them from the country, at whose loss the metropolis is extended, and becomes an enormous head to a proportionably small body. I have been  
like-

likewise told, that some hundreds of houses, in that part of London, which is called Marybone, are inhabited by women of pleasure, and such as are certainly not kept with an intention to increase population. It ought to be farther observed, that a great number of inhabitants of London, who are rich, or think themselves to be so, keep houses, at a greater or smaller distance from town, where they reside during the summer months, or at least some days in the week, at which time their town houses stand almost empty, in the same manner as their country houses during the winter. From such double house-keeping of a single family, which originates in luxury, the increase of houses may be proved, but not that of families and population. And whoever wants to see the blessings of procreation, ought not to look for them in the houses of those who are rich, and are said to be of quality; no, he must go, if he wishes to see how population goes on in London, into Spitalfields, Clerkenwell, the environs of the markets, the small and dark lanes, the little courts and alleys, where it swarms with children as if the procreative faculties were excited by premiums. Here, perhaps, an honest father, or a fond mother, may sometimes be found, who consider the number

of their children as a blessing; while, on the contrary, among the richer class of people, wealth and happiness are estimated in families in proportion to the smaller number of their children. They teach them too often and too soon, both by example and precept, the silly pride of riches, instead of good principles and sober morals. The parents themselves find now and then their reward accordingly, and see their elder children displeased, who not seldom censure among themselves their father and mother, when the number of younger children increases. These things, however, are the natural fruits of what is called a refined and a genteel way of life, and of an education adapted accordingly. Nature has made few things necessary for the support of our lives, but folly, fashion, and refinements, have increased them to thousands, in order to render poor mortals miserable.

I cannot help concluding this article with a few observations, which I believe are here not in a wrong place. It is at present, particularly with us on the continent, very much the fashion, among statesmen and politicians, to think and to write about population, and the means to promote and increase it, because the state thereby acquires additional strength and power,  
both

both in regard to the army and the finances, which equally gain by an increased number of subjects. The benevolent intention of the wise Creator, to give, by a most powerful instinct for propagation, existence and enjoyment of life to as many human beings as possible, is by no means an object which enters into the views of these politically wise men. The institutions, indeed, and regulations of the Jesuits, when they were the prudent rulers and the benevolent fathers of the people in Paraguay, never were regarded as patterns worthy of imitation by the rulers of the rest of the globe, mentioned in history. However, waving this point as chimerical, in the present situation of that state of society wherein we live, must it not strike a mind, given to observation and reflexion, as if the means which are pursued by those who are at the head of politics, are no ways consistent with those that are pointed out by the natural history of man, by the ages and numbers of both sexes? A little calculation, and a few questions, founded upon them, will both illustrate and confirm what I have said. In London are annually born about 19,000 children of both sexes, and perhaps the total number of all its inhabitants may amount to 750,000. It might be fairly reckoned, that 400,000 of

them are of the female sex, though I will suppose there were only 300,000. Let us divide these into three classes, and say that 100,000 are under the age of fifteen, as many between fifteen and five and thirty, and 100,000, which is estimating at least one third too much, are above that age. Let us farther suppose, that the second class alone bears children, and ask, how it happens that out of an hundred, only nineteen are pregnant within the year ? and why the proportion betwixt the barren and those that are not, is as five to one ? After this, let us add a few questions more : Is the imperfection of nature, or are the regulations of human society, the cause that population is not so numerous as it might be expected ? Are riches, of which hardly the thousandth part of a nation is possessed, is luxury beneficial to the increase of mankind ? Is matrimony, that institution in society, encouraged early enough to keep pace with the intentions and regulations of nature ? Are the matrimonial laws, and the human regulations relative to population, subordinate to and consistent with the eternal laws of nature, which alone are truth, or do they in many respects contradict them ? Should not moralists and lawgivers examine with a proper degree of attention, divested from prejudices,

the



the common notions of honour and virtue, which, though highly extolled by our ancestors, yet were by them but seldom put into practice? Shall those who say that war, famine, and epidemic disorders are necessary to thin the human race, be thought rational, or qualified for Bedlam? Friends to mankind, admirers of the wisdom and the goodness of your Creator, unprejudiced philosophers, who decide not by opinions imbibed by education, nor adopt, unexamined, the arrogant decisions of others; you who derive your sentiments from the careful observation of nature, and undoubted facts, answer these questions!

## C O M M E R C E.

SO much has been written on English commerce, that it is unnecessary for me to be prolix upon the subject. I do not pretend to advance any thing which can instruct an experienced merchant, or any one who is well acquainted with these matters : I wish only to entertain the inquisitive, and the foreign traveller. These things are also liable to such alterations and variations, that productions written upon this subject only ten years ago, may already be found imperfect and erroneous. It was supposed, after the loss of the greatest part of the American colonies, that the trade of England would be greatly diminished ; but, contrary to expectation, since the peace it has again flourished, and even increased.

The situation of the British isles, render them eminently convenient for trade, and it is almost impossible that they should ever be deprived of it. England, by the loss of the American colonies, has, indeed, suffered much ; but this may be repaired in time, if wise measures are pursued. Ireland, during the contest with America, embraced the opportunity of delivering herself

herself from the supremacy of British parliaments, and of getting rid of some hard commercial laws and restrictions, with which English selfishness, and a spirit of monopolizing, had cramped the commerce of the Irish, their manufactories, and their navigation. I should call this a misfortune for England, if I could ever persuade myself, that the restitution of natural rights, and the delivering from oppression, might, under any pretence, be justly classed among misfortunes.

The power and the riches of the English, which have attracted the admiration and the envy of almost all Europe, are greatly owing to their trade and commerce. The British nation proves indisputably, that an empire is not rendered powerful, rich, and respectable, by wars and conquests, which have loaded England with an enormous burden of debts, and been the source of other evils, but by agriculture, trade, navigation, industry, and manufactures. This island would long ago have sunk under its numerous taxes and most heavy impositions, if these means had not supported it. Before the reign of queen Elizabeth, these advantages were little known and little regarded; but in her time the power and wealth of the English began, and she might have advanced the commerce

merce of the nation infinitely more, if she had not almost changed it into the most oppressive monopolies. The navigation act, which was made under Cromwell, has been extremely advantageous to English commerce. At that time, however, the whole commerce of the English, at sea, amounted, annually, but to 95,266 tons. It had risen at the time of the Revolution to 190,000, and at the end of the reign of king William to 320,000. In the year 1774, it was no less than 800,000, which I believe was the time when British commerce had arrived at its summit; for, according to the accounts of importation and exportation laid before parliament, the latter amounted to 15,916,343 pounds sterling, to which it has not risen again; and there are years in which it has been five millions less, such as the year 1778.

Since so many advantages, and such great riches, are to be gained by trade, it is in the highest reputation among the English, who may be called, eminently, a trading nation. To promote the interest of commerce, a board of trade has been instituted; but, whether those who are the members of it, may be always thought to be sufficiently qualified for their office, is a matter which many English politicians and merchants are inclined to dispute.

There

There is no doubt that the regulations in regard to trade, stand greatly in need of reformation and improvement; but it has always been a complaint, that all kinds of reformation for the better are obstructed sometimes by ignorance, sometimes by obstinacy and selfishness. It seems to be acknowledged by every one, though but little conversant in these matters, that English trade, in many respects, is too much clogged and cramped; but, to make it entirely free, and abolish all restrictions, as some have proposed, appears in the present situation of British politics and finances, absolutely impracticable and disadvantageous; though it can hardly be denied that perfect freedom in trade is most consistent with its nature and spirit, to promote and insure its success.

English trade is either inland or foreign. I shall speak of the latter first, which extends over the whole globe, and has, at least for many years past, enriched the nation with millions annually. It is impossible to draw an exact balance of the English commerce, because every thing respecting it is founded on probability only. Those who make calculations relating to these matters, draw inferences from the course of exchange, from the calculation of foreign money, and from accounts of import-

importation and exportation. As to the first, very little can be inferred from the course of exchange, since it depends so much on tricks, on accidents, and various, not always very honourable, means which are used to raise or to lower it. As to the second, no foreign money circulates in England at present, from which, in regard to exportation, any thing can be guessed. There remain, therefore, only the custom-house books, as guides to find out the most probable balance of trade. The late Sir Charles Whitworth, who, as a commissioner of the customs and a member of parliament, was well qualified for such a business, gave himself the trouble to publish the annual custom-house accounts, which are laid before the house of commons by the proper officers, from the year 1697 to 1773<sup>9</sup>. It ought, however to be observed, that even these accounts are not without objections, and consequently not altogether to be depended on. For instance, where no duty is to be paid, nor bounty received, the entries made at the custom-house, will, from vanity or other less justifiable motives, by which some merchants are actuated,

<sup>9</sup> State of the Trade of Great Britain, and its Imports and Exports, progressively, from the year 1697, &c. by Sir Charles Whitworth, London, 1776. fol.

exceed

exceed the real value of imports or exports. It must farther be remarked, that the smuggling trade, until of late, has been so great, that the annual sum which government has lost in duties by it, is said to have been almost equal to the very sum which was actually received. Of all this smuggling trade nothing is to be met with in the custom-house accounts, and consequently the conclusions, in regard to the balance of trade, rendered uncertain. Lastly, it may be observed, that the book of rates, by which the duties are calculated, was composed long ago, when the value of merchandises was at a lower price than at present. However, this is very immaterial; for, since the goods imported and exported are rated by the same standard, and the proportion which they bear to each other is calculated on the same scale, the proper balance must be found.

I shall refer the reader, who wishes to be more particularly informed, to the tables of sir Charles Whitworth <sup>10</sup>, and content myself with mentioning only, the whole sum of imports and exports, in the year 1697 and 1773, the former being the year when sir Charles begins,

<sup>10</sup> In the German original, the table of the year 1773 is inserted at full length, but it was thought unnecessary to print it here.

the other where he ends. In the year 1697, the importation amounted to 3,482,586 l. sterling, and the exportation to 3,525,906 l. whence it appears that the exports exceeded the imports only by 43,319 l. In the year 1773, the importation amounted to 11,406,841 l. and the exportation to 14,763,253 l. Here the exports exceeded the imports by 3,356,411 l.; and what an amazing increase of trade, in favour of England, is this in less than eighty years! I shall only add, that there are years, wherein the balance in favour of exportation is greater than in 1773. For the year 1750, I find the exports surpassing the imports by 7,359,964 l. and this is the greatest sum I have met with. In the years 1751, 58, 61, 64, it always exceeds six millions.

It seems to be incomprehensible, what is become of all this money, which England, as it is supposed, has annually gained by trade. If I reckon only, that within thirty years, ending at 1773, annually, on an average, five millions have been gained, it amounts to an hundred and fifty millions. Where is this money gone to, when only about twenty-five millions, in bullion, are actually to be found in Great Britain and Ireland? There are only two ways in which I can, with any probability, account



for it. The first is, when I consider that much money is sunk in establishing plantations in the West-India islands, and in North America. The second is, when I calculate the sums which are annually paid as interest for money vested by foreigners in the public funds, and which are estimated at three millions. I may add a third, which is that most impolitic exportation of silver bullion to China, which has within these few years risen to above a million. Besides all this, it ought to be remembered, that wealth in trade is in many respects imaginary; that by far the greater part of it consists in paper, which in itself has no value, excepting what it derives from credit as its only support.

I do not intend to give a circumstantial account of the produce of England<sup>1</sup>, or what she exports or imports by trade: I shall only observe, that she has within herself so many resources for carrying on a profitable trade, that she might be respectable in the commercial world, even without her great and rich possessions in the East and West-Indies. The soil of this happy island produces not only the necessaries, and even superfluities of life,

<sup>1</sup> This is done in the German original, but it being supposed to be well known in England, is omitted in the translation.

but

but contains plenty of materials for manufactures and commerce. Agriculture is carried to great perfection, though there is still great room for farther improvement: and the fisheries might produce far more riches than they do at present, if they had not been hitherto rather neglected.

It is proved, by experience, that England loses in her trade with Russia, Denmark, and Sweden, considerably. Most materials for ship-building are fetched from thence; and it is natural, that the loss in war-time should be considerably greater, because these commodities are then more wanted. What England loses in her trade with Russia, is generally estimated, in time of peace, at half a million; and the balance of the trade, in favour of Sweden and Denmark, is calculated at 100,000 pounds annually. Should it happen that Russia becomes more successful in her manufactories, particularly in those of woollen cloth, she will be a still greater gainer in her traffic with England, because these manufactures, which the Russians stand much in need of, have hitherto lessened the balance.

Much has been written, and many disputes have taken place among my countrymen, concerning the question, " Whether England  
" loses

“ loses in her trade with Germany, or not ?” Whoever has resided, even but a short time, in England, and knows what is exported for Germany, and imported from thence, will readily admit, that England has considerably gained by this trade, and that Germany has lost. A mere comparison of those goods which are imported from Germany, and those which she receives from England, may easily decide the question. The value, the variety, and the quantity of those commodities which are imported from Germany, are inconsiderable, when compared with those that are exported. The article of German linens and yarn, has been, till of late years, the most weighty in the balance; but it is greatly diminished, and declines more and more. The importation of yarn is very beneficial for English manufactories; and it is very impolitic in the Germans, to suffer it to be exported, when they should manufacture their raw materials themselves, and then export them. The importation of staves, from Germany, and the East-country, is, in war-time, of more consequence than in time of peace; and, upon the whole, it might be asked, Whether, in this branch of trade, the Germans are more losers or gainers? They destroy their forests for present and temporary

VOL. I. L gain,

gain, at a time when they themselves begin to feel already a want of timber, and particularly of fuel. As for other goods, such as Moselle and Rhenish wines, mineral waters, toys from Nuremberg, pot-ashes, quicksilver, vitriol, smalts, juniper-berries, wax, &c. which come from Germany, they are of little weight in her balance of trade with England. The whole of the importation from Germany can, in the very best years, hardly amount to half a million of pounds sterling; but if, on the other side, the exports from England to Germany are estimated, it will appear, that the former gains, in the balance of trade with the latter, at least eight hundred thousand pounds, if not a million. The exportation of woollen manufactures, of Manchester goods, of stockings, of hardware, of Birmingham manufactures, is very considerable, though, perhaps, it was formerly still more so. The fur-trade to Germany is extremely beneficial to the Canada and Hudson's-bay companies; and if, to all this, be added the exportation of East-India goods, and the produce of the West-India islands, of both which so much is annually shipped for Germany, there remains no reason either for doubt or for surprise, that the balance of trade, between England and Germany, is greatly in fa-

your of the former. I cannot, however, dismiss this subject without making a few observations. In the first place, though it seems to be a losing trade for the Germans, yet it is not altogether so; for many of those goods, which they receive from England, do not wholly remain in Germany, but are sold to neighbouring countries, from which they receive their profits again, and reimburse themselves by this transitive trade. In the second place, I cannot pass over an assertion which I have read in some German writers, That Silesia alone furnishes England annually with 500,000 pounds worth of linens. I greatly doubt whether this ever was the fact in former times, and much less in the present, when the demand for Silesia linens has so greatly diminished, since the Irish, in almost all branches of the linen trade, have gained the superiority. In the third place, I shall mention, that those German statistical writers, as they style themselves, who very gravely, and with much warmth have maintained, that the balance of trade between England and Germany was in favour of the latter, have laid great stress on the importation of many German products from Italy, particularly by way of Venice, and from Holland, which are entered in the

custom-house books, as goods that came from these countries. After making some strict enquiry into this matter, I have found, that the goods thus imported, are by no means of that amount which is pretended.

The trade with France, before the conclusion of the commercial treaty, was undoubtedly a losing one for England: whether it be so still, I am unable to determine. According to the tables of imports and exports, by sir Charles Whitworth, which I have before mentioned, it would appear as if England had formerly, in the trade with France, gained at least two hundred thousand pounds annually; but the contraband trade, which was carried on till of late to so great a height, exceeded all the over-plus on the custom-house books. The greatest jealousy, in regard to trade, has always subsisted between the French and the English, and has caused many bloody and expensive wars: it would, therefore, be of infinite advantage to both nations, if a stop were put to this rivalry, <sup>2</sup> since humanity, and even sound policy seem to demand it. The last

<sup>2</sup> It ought to be remembered, that this, and the paragraph following, were printed in Germany, in the year 1784.

peace,

peace, which was concluded at Paris, gives some hopes for this, since it is proposed to settle the manner of carrying on trade differently from what has been done hitherto, and to make the commercial intercourse between both nations mutually advantageous. England, by this, certainly would be on the gaining side <sup>3</sup>. Immense quantities of French wines, and brandy, have been clandestinely imported, and the British revenues have lost very considerably : besides, most of the goods imported from France, are for the gratification of luxury and fashion. The great duties which were laid upon them, to serve as a prohibition, have operated the contrary way. The English epicureans and voluptuaries, of both sexes, seem for this very reason to value French wines, silks, furniture, and French fashionable follies, the more ; and if the number of French opera-dancers, dancing-masters, friseurs, cooks, valets, and chamber-maids, which within these fifteen years, even during war-time, have been imported duty free, and returned to France with the spoils of English folly, is brought into the account for settling the balance of trade, how

<sup>3</sup> This has since been done, and the French complain that they are by no means benefited by the new treaty of commerce which has been concluded.

much does England lose in its commerce with France ?

In the trade with Spain, which includes that of the Canaries, the balance has been always, hitherto, in favor of the English. They likewise have profited greatly, at least formerly, in the contraband trade with Spanish-America, and from bringing their fish from Newfoundland to Spanish markets. There were, as I have been told, some years ago, many more English houses in the mercantile way in Spain than there are now. Since the trade between England and Spain is advantageous to both nations, it were to be wished they were upon a more friendly footing with each other, and that on both sides, instead of standing upon punctilios, they would sacrifice, in trifles, to each other, readily. I am however, of opinion, that there will, at least on the side of the Spaniards, always subsist a kind of jealousy, as long as the

\* In the year 1785, when I passed through Paris, in my way to Switzerland, I was assured, from good authority, that by the books of the lieutenant of the police, it would appear, that annually more than 2000 English travellers resorted to that metropolis. Supposing, that on an average, each of them, noblemen and the rich included, spend, upon the whole, only fifty pounds sterling, in France, the sum which the French annually got from England, amounts to 100,000 pounds.

English



English are in possession of Gibraltar. Many, who may be regarded as judges in these matters, think it would be better for England to give this fortress up to Spain, for a proper equivalent, since, both in war and peace, great sums are expended to support and maintain it; and it is, in fact, they say, of little advantage to the nation, unless to feed the national pride, and to keep it for the sake of ostentation. This, however, I mention not entirely as my own, but as the sentiments of some Englishmen themselves. England, at present, cannot do very well without Spanish wool and Spanish silver, besides many drugs, among which the Peruvian bark may be reckoned the principal. On the other hand, the Spanish are in want of English manufactures; and though they have attempted to set up some of their own, yet, as I have been informed, they have hitherto met with no great success.

With Portugal, England has, for a considerable time, carried on a very profitable trade. English manufactures have found there a very good market, and so have their fish from Newfoundland. However, the Portuguese have commenced some manufactories themselves, and the late marquis of Pombal, who never could forgive the whole English nation, for a

box on the ear which he received from an English lady, did every thing to promote the establishment of them. It was, therefore, not patriotism, properly speaking, that prompted him to do so, but rather revenge, as he thought, on the English nation. Though the few manufactories established in Portugal, have by no means answered the expectations of those that instituted and promoted them, and some even were soon totally ruined, yet, it is said, that the sale of a few English manufactures has been lessened among the Portuguese. The French have, likewise, taken the advantage of the great prices for which the English sell their goods in Portugal, to undersell them in many articles, particularly in cloth, and other woollen manufactures. This has hurt the English trade in Portugal more than the establishment of manufactures in that country; and the French have so well succeeded in their endeavours, that the Portuguese have begun to prefer many French manufactures to the English. The balance of trade is, however, greatly in favour of England, though it seems difficult to fix the exact sum. Some say it amounts to a million and a half annually; but I believe those come nearer the truth, who settle it at somewhat less

less than a million. Wine and fruit are the principal commodities which the English receive from Portugal; their East-Indiamen, in going to India, take great quantities of Madeira wine with them, and dispose of it, not only in Asia, but bring a great part back to England, because a notion is entertained, that this sort of wine is greatly improved, by twice passing the line. The wine which comes from Oporto is so much esteemed in England, that all other wines must give way to it; and the expectations of the French, that, after the conclusion of the late commercial treaty, their wines would become the most favoured among the English, are greatly disappointed.

It is thought, that England, in its trade with Holland, gains annually a million of pounds sterling. Supposing this to be the fact, it does, by no means follow, that Holland loses this sum entirely. She hardly keeps half of what she imports from England to herself, but disposes of it again among other nations, with some profit. On the contrary, the Dutch, before the late regulations were made, to stop the contraband trade, were considerable gainers by smuggling, which greatly diminished their loss in the balance of trade with the English. Moreover, the Dutch, though

though this is no concern of trade, are the most numerous and the most considerable creditors in the English funds, whence they draw great sums, and this is ready money !

I have heard it said, that the balance in trade with the Austrian Netherlands is greatly against the English, who lose, in some years, half a million by it. This, I think, is hardly to be credited ; and if the loss in war time is rather considerable, it is certainly not so in time of peace. The smuggling trade in lace, cambrics, and such kind of goods, has been, perhaps, most detrimental ; but I have reason to think, that at present it is not carried on with the success which it had formerly.

From Italy, the English import more than they export, and the balance is consequently against them. Oil, wine, raw silk, and some other commodities which they fetch from thence, amount to more than the fish, some India goods, and some British manufactures, which they carry thither. It is said, however, that their loss does not exceed annually 200,000 pounds sterling, if even so much ; but the English travellers in Italy, and the pretended connoisseurs, who buy antiquarian rubbish, and copied pictures for originals, enrich, likewise, Italy with English money.

Into

Into Barbary are sent various sorts of war-like instruments, and iron and steel manufactures ; nay, the English, who are so zealous for liberty, and hold slavery in such abhorrence, furnish the Barbary despots with chains, to keep their wretched slaves in bondage. Englishmen happen now and then to be among these unfortunate beings ; but it is said, that trade must not suffer on their account. Fine wool, oil, olives, capers, wax, lion-skins, drugs, and other commodities, are brought back ; and I am informed, that England in this trade does not lose, though the gain is very trifling.

The trade to the West-India islands is one of the most considerable in the British commerce : the annual fleets by which it is mostly carried on, go under the denomination of Jamaica and Leeward-Islands fleets. They are of the greatest importance, and bring sugar, coffee, cotton, ginger, indigo, cocoa, rum, mahogany, logwood, and other commodities. From England, all necessaries of life, all sorts of utensils, all that belongs to furniture and dress, nay, it might be said, a great part of the luxuries of life, are exported to these islands. The value of the imports from them, together with the duties they pay on entering into English ports, are estimated at a million  
and

and a half; besides, many thousands live by fitting out these fleets, which, likewise, may be considered as a nursery for seamen. The states of America, when peace with them was concluded, were in hopes, that they should reap great benefit from trading with these islands; but the British parliament has taken care to limit this intercourse very much: however, notwithstanding all the precaution taken to keep these islands in subjection to Great Britain, it is not improbable that they will take an opportunity, one time or other, to unite with the American states, and become independent. A great deal of British money has been sunk in plantations in these islands, and if the English should be ousted of their old possessions, it will be rather hard, if they are obliged to say, that they give up the farther enjoyment of the fruit of their labour and their expence.

The North American provinces, which, after seven years struggle for liberty, are now independent, were formerly a great source of wealth for England. It was reckoned, that this American trade was worth, to the British government and merchants, above two millions of pounds sterling annually; but though the loss of thirteen provinces, and the island  
of

of Tobago, is very severe, and an increase of about an hundred and thirty millions of new debts, new interest, and new taxes, still severer, yet it may serve as a good, though dearly-bought lesson, to the English, to act in future with greater precaution, with more moderation, and less oppressively, which, as the now independent Americans say, was the cause which excited them to throw off the yoke, that appeared to them intolerable. They have been reproached by some of the English with the blackest ingratitude, and yet there are good grounds for an apology. The colonies have been compared to disobedient, ungrateful, and unnatural children; but this comparison, notwithstanding it has been repeated many times, and often urged with great warmth, is by no means in point. It might very properly be asked, whether the power of parents is to be never at an end, in regard to their children? whether a son is to be always under a guardian, and never allowed to be his own master? With what a just contempt would the English have received any demand of the Danish kings, to be tributary to them, and acknowledge them for their sovereigns, because the Anglo-Saxons were emigrants from Holfatia, who settled in  
 England,

England, and there established colonies. When the ancestors of the American colonies, more than a century ago, were obliged to seek for an asylum, in the then American wildernesses, against religious persecutions, which they experienced in their native country, it was looked upon by many in England as a happy thing, to get rid of people who had, as it was thought, too much of the republican spirit, and the wish, perhaps, was pretty general, to hear no more of them. But when those, who had exiled themselves for the sake of enjoying political and religious liberty, began to make their situation a little comfortable, and, after infinite labour and hardships, had hopes of some prosperity, their far-distant rulers were immediately at hand, to burthen them with various sorts of impositions, taxes, and restrictions. The established church in England wanted episcopal establishments in America; government demanded revenues; and the English merchant and manufacturer wished to increase his riches at the expence of the colonies. Hence various sorts of taxes, navigation-acts, restrictions in regard to trade, prohibitions of erecting certain manufactories, and endeavours to lay a foundation for episcopal church-government. Was it ever to be expected, that a people, who had  
increased



increased to millions, who had no representatives in the British parliament, to speak and act for them; a people who remembered the hardships their forefathers had endured, and felt their own oppressions as strongly as the inclination to be free; was it a wonder, that a people who thought they had finished the years of their minority, and had come to an age to be their own masters, should try to throw off the yoke which they found too troublesome? The relation in which nations stand, in regard to each other, are almost the same as between private men. The Americans thought they stood no more in need of protectors; and the English themselves excited them, by the manner in which they treated them, to try whether they were mistaken in their good opinion of themselves or not. During the war, I have heard a hundred times, the partizans of the then ministry, some clergymen of the established church, and many manufacturers, together with some merchants, exclaim, What an ungrateful set of people are the Americans, to make such ill returns to their parent-state, by whom they were, at a great expence, protected in the war before! It might, however, always be asked, Whether the Americans would ever have been attacked by the enemies

mies of Great Britain, if they had not been her subjects; and whether the Americans were not of essential service to the English, by making a common cause with them, and dividing the strength with which Great Britain was attacked? Besides, America may say, that the English were well paid for what they did for them, if it be even called protection, during the war, which ended by the peace in 1763; for England has had, since that time to 1775, on an average, a yearly balance of trade, with the colonies, that amounted to about two millions. Are not six and twenty millions, collected within thirteen years, a very handsome sum, besides what the government drew from them? However, the war is finished, and the Americans are free; their connections with Europe are no more of that kind which they were, when subject to Great Britain; and they will not find themselves, in future, involved in all the wars and broils which continually disturb the peace of Europe. The greatest part of mankind judge from prejudice, and one generally repeats the cry of the other, let it be ever so absurd. When those, who were first stigmatised with the most unmeaning name of rebels, remain conquerors, they who before clamorously abused them, become  
come

come silent, and the party triumphant is said to have fought for the good cause. Thus, when those who were at first styled heretics in a country, become the established church, they who first persecuted and damned them, will thank heaven if they, in their turn, are not dealt with according to the law of retribution. But few are acquainted with the history of man, and of whole nations; few have considered and meditated on the rights of mankind; few are possessed of sufficient strength of mind and abilities, to examine with impartiality and resolution, in riper years, the notions and ideas of fame and honour, of shame and disgrace, which they, by education, were taught to combine with certain words, and to determine their real value. I have not the least doubt, but that the revolution which has taken place in America<sup>s</sup> will be of happy consequences even for all Europe, to governments of states and the liberty of nations, of which posterity, a century hence, will know more than we who live in the present age. England will never be ruined because she has lost some of her colonies. If she cuts, or unties, some way or other, the Gordian knot of her national debts; if she

<sup>s</sup> This was written in the year 1784, and it begins already to be verified.

makes proper use of the misfortunes she has met with, and the evils she has experienced, which have been chiefly the offspring of pride, avarice, luxury, and corrupted morals, the English nation may become more happy, and more respected than it ever has been ; and I most sincerely wish, that the period when such an epocha commences may be at no great distance.

It might be said, that the trade of England with regard to Ireland has rather suffered within these few years, as I have already mentioned. Several attempts have been made of late to bring about a commercial treaty between both nations, but hitherto without the desired effect. Till the year 1783, the British parliament had claimed a supremacy over Ireland and her parliament; but the revolution in America roused the spirit of the Irish, and 80,000 of their volunteers made a successful attempt, to convince the English that the power till then exercised over Ireland was a kind of usurpation. By an act of the British parliament, made in April 1780, it was acknowledged, that the Irish parliament was independent of that of Great Britain. The Irish themselves seem, at present, to wonder, why they have not cast off their yoke long ago, and the English how they could  
so

so long maintain a power which did not belong to them. But whoever is acquainted with the annals of nations, and knows the power of education, joined to that remissness and torpidity which prevents new generations from examining the faults and follies of their ancestors, in order to remove or reform them, will not be at a loss to account how this has happened. But, since the Irish, with their parliament, have now obtained the right of internal and external legislation, and can regulate their commerce and navigation by acts of their own legislature, it will be impossible for the English, in future, to confine the trade, manufactures, and navigation of Ireland, as they, perhaps, might think proper. If the British cabinet will influence the Irish parliament in future, it must be done by different means than before; and whether the treasury and patronage will be always in a condition to afford them, must be left for time to decide. Should the Irish establish successfully various kinds of manufactories, and improve their agriculture, it will undoubtedly hurt the English trade: but, luckily for England, the Irish nation is not a little addicted to sloth and idleness; the greatest part of it live in poverty, and are so much used to the oppressions of their nobility, gentry, and clergy,

that, at least, half a century and ten Swifts will be required, to awaken them from their lethargy, to render them attentive to their own advantages, and to make use of those rights, to which they are intitled by nature, and which—though it sounds rather odd—are confirmed by that act of the British parliament, which I have before mentioned. Hitherto the balance of trade between England and Ireland, has been stated at half a million at least, in favour of the former. Supposing, however, that it might lessen, the English will, notwithstanding, draw a very great sum of ready money from their sister kingdom by the number of Irish noblemen and gentlemen, who either constantly reside in England, or come over from motives of curiosity to visit London, Bath, Scarborough, and other places; or resort hither to solicit preferment in the church, the law, the army, and the navy. Besides many young Irishmen are sent to the public schools, and the universities in England, or to study the law in inns of court, for whose support large sums are remitted. Considering all this, I am inclined to think, that not much less than a million of Irish money is annually spent in England.

T

To promote the increase of trade, government has granted to several societies exclusive rights or monopolies. If a branch of trade be still very young and tender, granting monopolies may be perhaps prudent, to bring them to more strength and maturity; but if societies which enjoy such privileges, arrive at too great wealth, and become proud and insolent; if they become burdensome to the rest of the community, they then are to be deemed detrimental to trade, and the evil arising from such a cause, is to be prevented, either by restrictions and wise laws, or by a total dissolution of such monopolies. In that society wherein we live, none of its members are more intolerable and insipid, than insolent and purse-proud tradesmen and merchants, or sneering, rich, and impertinent farmers. Those who are occupied in agriculture, and those that carry on trade and commerce are among the most respectable members of society; but both lose much of their utility and value whenever they become insolent and overbearing. I could easily prove and illustrate this, by the history of many monopolies and monopolizers; but I wish rather to give an account of those societies, which bear the name of trading companies in England.

The African company received its charter from Charles II. They built forts on the coast of Guinea, and established factories ; but their conduct being afterwards not as it should be, parliament in the year 1751, took the matter in hand, gave leave for erecting a new company, and granted a sum of money to indemnify the old for giving up their charter and privileges in favour of the former. This African company was under the regulation of the board of trade. Every British subject is at present permitted to trade to the coast of Africa, and parliament generally grants a sum of 10,000*l*. for the support of the forts erected there for the protection of the trade ; which, therefore, properly speaking, cannot be called a monopoly. Much has been of late written and said upon the slave-trade, which belongs to that of Africa, and the friends of humanity were in great hopes that it would be abolished ; but they have, hitherto, been disappointed. No doubt is entertained by any impartial man, who is neither a slave-trader nor a planter, and not connected with either of them, that this trade is a disgrace to those nations who carry it on ; and it has been proved, in parliamentary debates, in the most clear and satisfactory manner, that the voice of humanity, as well as political reasons, call



call aloud for its abolition. Two things, however, in regard to this dispute, seem to be not properly distinguished by both parties, by whom it is carried on ; at least they have generally lost sight of them. These two questions, Shall the slave-trade be abolished ? and this, Shall all the negroes, who are now actually employed as slaves, be set at liberty, and be declared their own masters ? are undoubtedly very distinct from each other, and very differently to be answered. No man, who consults his own feelings will give a negative to the first ; and if those, who from unworthy motives or from depravity of mind, become advocates of this inhuman trade, are asked only this simple question : Would it not be right, and very just, for another person, who could, by some means or other overpower you, to take you away from your own country, and transport you, against your will, wherever he pleased, to put you to hard labour, and chastise you most unmercifully if you did not fulfil his commands ? the indignation which they would immediately show, on this question being put to them, would be sufficient to confound them. After this they deserve no farther refutation, but contempt, since they deny that justice to others which they claim themselves as the right

of man, and as due to humanity. Besides, it has been proved to a demonstration, that the present number of negroes, who are actually now on the British West-India islands, is sufficient, with the addition only of some African females, to propagate their own race, if they were properly treated, to such a degree, that there would be, within a few years, by far more than are wanted. The other question, however, Whether the negroes that are now employed as slaves are to be set at liberty? ought to be answered according to the different views it is placed in, and with retrospect to circumstances. The Quakers in Pennsylvania, we are told, have given liberty to their negroes in the most generous manner, and have had no reason to repent of this noble act of humanity. But the planters in the West-Indies do not think like Quakers; they calculate the sums their negroes have cost, and the money they have spent upon them. They ask, Who will reimburse us, who will indemnify us on account of our loss, if we give them liberty to be their own masters? However, since it happens that calculations and self-interest interfere in this instance, with the rights and exertions of humanity, let those who will not free their negroes, keep them as slaves, but let it not be permitted to treat them  
cru-

cruelly ; forbid the farther importation, at least of male slaves, and let the planters know, that if they wish in future to have the benefit of the labours of the negroes, they must promote the increase of them within their islands, and that the next generation, which succeeds the present negroes, are to be as free people as themselves. If a plan like this were executed by authority, and the influence of government, it would soon put a stop to this shameful traffic, which is a stain on the British national character. And since the English were the first that began and introduced the slave-trade, it would redound to the credit of the present times to abolish it, and set a good example for imitation, to those nations who followed the bad one which they have given.

A Turkey company was erected under James I. but it cannot be called a monopoly, since whoever pays a small sum to the company, may obtain the liberty of trading to the Levant. This trade is at present not very flourishing, which perhaps may be owing to the French, who have insinuated themselves into the favour of the Turks, and supply their wants in preference to the English ; though there is no doubt but that, particularly at present, many English manufactures, especially of the woollen kind,

go by way of France to the Levant, and are disposed of among the Turks, by the hands of the French. During the late war with the American colonies, I remember that the Levant trade of the English was almost totally at a stand, on account of the superiority of the French in the Mediterranean, and I believe it is at present not very flourishing. The Turkey company, according to their charters, should maintain the British ambassador at Constantino-ple; but I have reason to think, that it is not always rich enough to do this, since, within my time, parliament has been obliged to grant sums of money for the support of the ambassador.

The South-Sea company was, by its institution, intended for a monopoly, but it has even in the beginning, made little use of its privileges; and when the peace at Aix la Chapelle was concluded, the English renounced their right of sending annually a ship to Acapulco, for which the company received by act of parliament an equivalent. Government has borrowed, from time to time, great sums of this company, and the whole amounts, at present, to very near twenty-six millions. Its present members are, in fact, only the creditors of the public, who receive their interest-money at the  
South-

South-Sea house, where their business is conducted.

The principal of all trading companies in England, and it might be said on the whole globe, is the East-India company. It is a monopoly in the strictest sense, and in fact an engine of state to serve the views of government. It has done much harm to England; it has imported much Asiatic riches into the kingdom, and also much evil and mischief. So much has been written about the first institution, the progress, and the history of this company, that I have no reason to repeat what has been related by so many writers<sup>6</sup>. The arguments have likewise, oftentimes, been stated, on both sides, for and against the advantages and usefulness of this company, though it appears to me, that the harm which the company has done to England, outweighs all the advantages which are alleged by those who are either interested in it, or partake of the good things and emoluments which it has sometimes to distribute. When the charter of the company expired in the year 1780, it was thought by some, that their monopoly would be at an end, and that

<sup>6</sup> A pretty full and circumstantial account is given in the tenth volume of the *Modern Universal History*; but it does not include the last thirty years.

the trade to the East Indies would be free; but those who entertained such an opinion were mistaken. Government is not so rich as to repay very easily the 2,200,000 l. which it owes to the company, and which is one of the conditions to be fulfilled before it can take away the charter. The ministry knew too well how serviceable the company is to their views, and the company itself found the sweets of a lucrative monopoly too agreeable, to hesitate long in bringing a sacrifice of another two millions to its tutelar goddess, which prolonged its charter for ten years more. This grant, however, is very nearly expiring; and it is now supposed that government, at the end of it, will, by means of an act of parliament, take all territorial possessions from the company in Asia, to invest the crown with the same, and leave but an exclusive trade, and the commercial concerns, in the hands of the company. Time alone will shew whether this supposition is founded in truth. If it be so, little doubt remains, but that the British nation, as well as the millions of natives in India, who have groaned a long time under the sovereign power of a few, who called themselves English merchants, will be benefited, by the adoption of such measures. During my residence in England,

land, this company has been more than once, as it seemed, on the brink of insolvency. They have been often under a necessity to apply to government for assistance, and to parliament for leave to borrow millions, to be enabled by new loans, to pay their dividends, their duties at the custom-house, and old debts. The mal-administration of the company's affairs is very evident, since the company itself is poor, and those that are sent to India as its servants, though in meaner capacities, accumulate money with ease, and generally return with riches to England. Whoever is so lucky as to obtain a governor's place in any of the East-India settlements, or only a seat in one of the councils, nay, even any other employment, or a monopoly, or contract, may be sure that within a few years his fortune will be made, and that he can return to his own country to live in affluence. It may easily be supposed, that those who enrich themselves in such a manner, within a short time, have had their own interest more at heart than that of the company, and that such amazing fortunes as they bring home with them, are not always gotten by the fairest means, but too often in a manner which disgraces humanity, as well as the company by whom they are employed, and stigmatizes

not

not only their own character, but stains even that of the nation to which they belong. The rapacity, the crimes, the extortions, and cruelties of such miscreants, are frequently laid to the charge of the company, which has oftentimes, in India, suffered, and created enemies, on account of crimes committed by individuals. The history of the East-India company, and the transactions of many of its servants, employed in Asia, furnishes too frequently instances of human depravity, of cruelty, of oppression. It affords scenes of human misery hardly to be credited or described; and is rich in anecdotes, which make a sad contrast with that aversion to tyranny, and that generosity, which otherwise constitutes a part of the English national character. I could quote many British writers in confirmation of what I have said, who express themselves in much stronger terms.

The reasons why the affairs of the East-India company are not in the best situation, is owing to a number of causes, though I shall content myself by pointing out only two of them. The first, and, I believe, the principal, is, the company's losing sight of the intention for which it was instituted. As a mercantile society, its views were only to be directed to commerce; but instead of that, it



went upon conquests, and carried on most expensive wars, by which means it became dreaded and hated by the Asiatic princes and nations, whose countries bordered upon the conquests of the company. They naturally were in fear that they themselves should be devoured in their turn, by a set of Europeans, who, under the assumed mercantile character, were armed with the power of sovereignty. The keeping, therefore, and the protecting of those immense tracts of land, which they had made themselves masters of, require armies, forts, and a number of expences, which exhaust the treasures of the company. Their poor Indian subjects, which amount to many millions, however meek, humble, innocent, industrious, and accustomed to tyranny and oppression they may be, are yet unacquainted with English laws and usages; addicted and devoted to their own, they are displeased with their European masters, and would, perhaps, be glad to be governed again by princes of their own country, and by the laws derived, time immemorial, from their ancestors. It is true, the Asiatic despots and nabobs themselves, are very seldom fathers of their people, or mild and benevolent rulers over the countries subject to them; but the greater part of those, who might be called  
English

English East-India nabobs, are still worse. Many of them arrive very hungry, and in an emaciated condition in India; they suck as eagerly as leeches, to fill themselves the quicker, that they may return the sooner to their own country, and move in a higher and more brilliant sphere on their own island; for most of those, who are styled in England nabobs, are of low extraction, and starting up, like mushrooms out of their obscure condition, are naturally the more infected with national pride and prejudices. They, therefore, look upon the poor Indians as a race of men very inferior to themselves, though they are infinitely better. They think, that to be created an English baronet, to procure, by bribery and corruption, a seat in parliament, and to live, upon the frequently ill-gotten Indian wealth, in a splendid manner, in the English mode, is far more honourable and consistent with the happiness of life, than to slumber in Asiatic luxury, like a mogul, or to be adored as an Indian nabob. The fortunes brought over from Asia, and the wealth which came into the kingdom, by means of the company of which I am speaking, have done infinite mischief to England. They have corrupted the morals of the people; they have increased not only the luxuries, but enhanced,  
also,

also, the price of the necessaries of life ; they have encouraged bribery and corruption. It is to be regretted, that government has not hit upon some means to oblige those, who come back from the East-Indies like nabobs, to appropriate part of their Asiatic spoils to public benefit. When, in former times, the Roman pretors returned to the capital out of their provinces, in a manner somewhat similar to the English nabobs, means were generally devised to ease them a little of their, not always very honestly, acquired riches, by making them ædiles. There are in England many bridges, where, on passing them, a heavy toll is to be paid ; there are public edifices, goals, work-houses, and others of the kind, which are to be supported, in great measure, by the earnings of the industrious. Supposing the honour of erecting and supporting such edifices was bestowed on such nabobs, to lessen a little the public burdens, could they complain of any injustice ?

Another reason, why the East-India company is in but indifferent circumstances, may be derived from the great demands of government, which, particularly during the American war, have amounted to some millions. Lord North has, under several pretences, squeezed the com-

pany like a sponge. When he was obliged to give up his place as prime minister, there were 500,000 pounds of his demands on the company left unpaid, which were relinquished by parliament as unjust.

British subjects born, as well as foreigners, may become members of this company; and those proprietors, who have had a thousand pounds for a twelvemonth in its funds, are entitled to a vote, when a court is assembled. Those who are possessed of 3000 pounds may give two, and those of 6000 pounds three votes. The number of the directors of the company, the chairman and deputy chairman included, amounts to four and twenty. Six of them go out annually, and as many new ones are re-chosen. They generally meet once a week, but in cases of emergency oftener.

The subscriptions or shares of the first proprietors, in this company, were originally fifty pounds only; but in the year 1676, on account of the increase of the profits of the stock they were doubled and advanced to 100 pound. Since that time, the India funds are very much risen, though they bear always a proportion to the government funds, by which they are regulated. The interest-money, or, as it is called, the dividend, is paid half-yearly. Some y

ago, an attempt was made to raise it to ten or twelve pounds annually, by which means the value of the original shares would have been more than trebled, but parliament wisely interfered in this business. During my residence in England, the company has been several times under a necessity to borrow money, to be enabled to pay their dividends. In the year 1773, they were obliged to apply to parliament, that government might support their credit with a loan of 1,400,000 pounds. On this occasion the parliament enacted, that the company's annual dividend should not amount to more than six *per cent.* till the borrowed sum was repaid. This done, they might raise the dividend to seven *per cent.* and when their bond-debts were reduced to a million and a half, it should be permitted to fix it at eight; and in case a surplus then remained, government were to be intitled to three-fourths of it. The above mentioned loan being re-paid, and the bond-debts being reduced to the sum fixed on by parliament, the company pays at present a dividend of eight *per cent.* though it has been under a necessity of borrowing again, to be enabled to do it. The India stocks are generally lower than those of government, and I suppose the reasons to be the following. *First*—Because the credi-

tors have only the credit of the company for security; and in case that should be found tottering, it must depend on the assistance of government. *Secondly*—Because the funds of the company must be at an end when its charter expires, and government will not renew it. *Lastly*—Because the dividends are not always equal, and can be reduced to fix *per cent.* as in the instance which I have before mentioned.

With respect to what concerns the traffic of the company itself, I shall confine myself to a few observations only. I have read, in some German publications, that this company has not the liberty to build its own ships; but this is an untruth; for it contracts for the building of them, and takes them into service, not from restraint, but from motives of œconomy. These ships seldom make more than three voyages to the East-Indies, when they are declared unfit for the company's service. Such a voyage is generally performed within eighteen months of which fix are reckoned for going to the East-Indies, and as many to come back; the other fix are for the stay which they make there. The company insures neither the ships nor the cargoes, by which means it saves great pences, provided no misfortune happens. Private property is generally insured. The number

ships which the company annually sends out to Asia is undetermined : formerly it amounted to near thirty, but at present the number must be greater, on account of the increased importation of tea. These ships, when they are in India, do not go from one port to the other, to collect their cargoes. This, as I have been informed, is done by country ships, and by traders, who furnish the East-Indiamen with those goods that complete their lading.

The company being obliged, by its charter, to export annually English manufactures, to the amount of 500,000 pounds, disposes of them in Asia. A great deal of these goods was sent, by way of the Red-Sea, to Arabia, and from thence by caravans to Egypt and the Levant. The Arabs, however, behaving rather insolently and oppressively to the English traders, it was thought expedient to try the navigation from the East-Indies, strait to Suez, over the Red-Sea, which was formerly thought a dangerous passage, at least by the Arabs. Mr. Niebuhr, whose travels are well known, communicated, when he was in India, to Capt. Holford, a chart of the Red-Sea, which he had drawn up when he navigated it, in an Arabian ship, coming from Suez. By means of this map, it is said, an English ship went from Bombay to Suez, and made a prosperous voyage,

age, without touching at any Arabian port, and without being exposed to extortions. Many other ships, afterwards, performed the same voyage, and both European and Indian goods and manufactures were brought to the Levant, and to Egypt, in this way. It was, however, soon discovered, that such a trade was not very advantageous, because the Eastern markets became overstocked with English manufactures. The prices of them fell, of course, as the East-India company carried them across the Red-sea, and the Turkey company across the Mediterranean. This, it is said, induced the former to order, that no more of its Asiatic ships should go from an Indian port strait to Suez: though it is reported, likewise, by others, that government, finding a loss in duties paid on India goods, which from England were exported again to the Levant, put a stop to such a navigation on the Red-Sea, by spending some money at Constantinople, and inducing the Porte to interdict this East-India trade to Suez, and from thence by way of Cairo, into Egypt and the Levant\*.

The profits of the company, arising from their trade, are said to amount annually to two millions of pounds sterling, which calculation

\* I have been lately informed, that it is carried on notwithstanding.

appears



appears to me rather too low, considering that from this sum 900,000 pounds are to be deducted for duties to be paid to government, and for the expences of shipping and navigation. The duties on importation, which are to be paid to government, by the company, cannot be exactly ascertained, since they vary according to the quantity of goods imported. They have hitherto generally been estimated at 600,000 pounds annually; though I have reason to think, that they, at present, must amount to a great deal more, since the commutation-act has generally increased the company's importation of tea, by checking that of the smugglers.

The company has to dispose of lucrative places and employments; and that of being a commander of an East-Indiaman, is not one of the least. I have been told, that after three prosperous voyages, such a captain will have acquired a fortune sufficient to make him independent, and to maintain a family in a very decent manner: exceptions, however, to this general opinion, are to be met with. The ships of the company, in going to India, commonly stop at the Cape of Good Hope, to take in refreshments and supplies. On their return, they do the same at the Island of St. Helena, which

belongs to the English, but is difficult of access, in going to Asia.

When the homeward-bound East-Indiamen arrive in the British channel, they are met, at a great distance from the English ports, by smuggling vessels, that buy the India and China goods, which they can get from those, who, as officers in the service of the company, may bring from India, on their own account, a certain allowance of merchandises. These, after paying the customary duties on entering the port of London, should be sold at the public sales of the company ; but many gentlemen will rather, if they can, dispose of them, duty free, to these smugglers, who pay immediately in ready money, and take the goods away, before any of the custom-house officers have been on board of the company's ships. When these ships are at anchor near the English coast, or on the Thames, I have sometimes seen a kind of fair near them, on the shore, where a brisk traffic is carried on, in spite of all laws in favour of duties and customs, which are always very readily set aside, by those who think the dictates of natural liberty superior to all the injunctions which are intended to cramp it. However, since the late vigorous measures against contraband trade have been adopted,

it

it may reasonably be presumed, that this kind of traffic is no more of that consequence which it was some years ago.

I shall conclude this short account which I have given of the East-India company, with this observation only, that if the monopoly is to be continued, it will, undoubtedly, be to the advantage of the company, if government takes from them their territorial possessions, which are certainly the chief cause of the difficulties and debts in which they have been so frequently involved. It will be beneficial to millions of poor Indians, though there are many who think that this relief may come too late; since, in their opinion, the natives of the East-Indies, in less than fifty years, will be skilled in the military art, as practised in Europe; and, completely tired of the oppressions which they have suffered from foreigners, will shake off the yoke under which they have groaned, and drive that handful of Europeans out of India, who have ruled over them, too often, with a rod of iron.

The Hudson's bay company is another monopoly, perhaps the most lucrative that exists; for, it is said, that the proprietors receive 2000 *per cent.* on their capital. This appears to me to border upon exaggeration; but it may be laid down

down as certain, that the profits of this company are very great; which, perhaps, is the reason why they keep their affairs so secret, and in such mysterious darkness. It would certainly be very beneficial for England, if this trade were laid open to every adventurer. Instead of only three or four ships, by which, at present, it is carried on, more than forty; and instead of about a hundred and fifty sailors, perhaps two thousand might be employed in it. The exports to Hudson's bay, if some inland settlements were erected, might be, as well as imports from thence, much more considerable than they are at present. This company gets a great deal of money for its goods from Germany. Most of the buyers, at its public sales, are German furriers and merchants, settled in London, who, at least formerly, used to bid furiously against each other, and made the people, who sent them their commissions from abroad, pay for the envy and spite which they bore against each other. The company is naturally much benefited by such dispositions of their customers. Let me, however, observe, that perhaps not half of the goods bought for Germany remain there, but are sent to our eastern and northern neighbours, by which means we ourselves profit by this trade. It may,

may, perhaps, be thought, that the navigation from England to Hudson's bay, is not always the safest; but I have been assured, that none can be more so, and that hardly an instance can be produced, of any ship belonging to this company being lost. It is very probable, that if the American states grow more populous towards the north, this will lessen the immense profit which the company, as it is said, has hitherto reaped from its monopoly<sup>\*</sup>.

The Russia company received its charter in the reign of queen Mary, and it was confirmed by queen Elizabeth. The company has hitherto enjoyed great privileges in Russia; but it seems as if the government there began to think differently, in this respect, from what it did formerly, and that the favours which the English have received in that empire, will be rather lessened. This company, properly speaking, cannot be called a monopoly, since every protestant Englishman, on paying five pounds sterling to the fund of the company, may obtain the liberty of trading to Russia. A few years ago, many foreigners, in order to obtain the privileges of the English in Russia, used  
to

<sup>\*</sup> This was written in 1784, and the fur-merchants in London complain already, that the Americans get into possession of the fur-trade.

to come over to England to be naturalized, and then return; but an act of parliament was made, by the desire of the company, which has greatly and very properly limited this mode of partaking of those prerogatives, which English merchants and traders enjoy in Russia.

The British factory at Hamburgh is also free from the imputation of being a monopoly, or a company which carries on an exclusive trade. I have seen it asserted in a modern German publication, that the English trade to Germany was in the hands of the British factory at Hamburgh; but this is by no means true. Any person, who has an inclination for it, whether he be an Englishman, or a foreigner, settled and naturalized in England, may carry on trade to Hamburgh, or any other part of Germany, and style himself a Hamburgh-merchant, or whatever he pleases. Those that belong to the British factory at Hamburgh, and who are mostly Scotch, enjoy greater privileges than the citizens themselves. They are not only the judges in their own disputes and litigations, but also in those which they may have with the inhabitants of the place, inviting only two of the magistrates to be present at the settling of them. I shall not investigate the causes whence the privileges of the English at Hamburgh,

burgh, both in civil and ecclesiastical matters, arise; but confine myself to this general remark only, that whoever, on considering the reception, the encouragement, and the more than friendly treatment which the English meet with in foreign countries, compares the reception and state of foreigners in London, who are of service to the British trade, manufactures, arts, and sciences, cannot help shrugging up his shoulders, and making some observations, not of the most favourable kind, on British ideas of liberty, generosity, and liberality. The reception and encouragement of foreign opera-dancers, singers, fiddlers, quack-doctors, milliners, hair-dressers, cooks, valets, and such gentry, I except of course; for they have no reason to complain.

The coasting and the inland trade is of great consequence, and extremely advantageous. The former is carried on by a number of ships of various sizes: the fitting out, the victualling, and the providing them with necessaries, employ a great number of hands, and support many families. The seamen engaged in this trade, are said to amount from fifty to sixty thousand: it is therefore a great nursery for British sailors, particularly the coal trade from Newcastle to London. Some are of opinion,  
that

that the coasting trade would be rendered more flourishing, if greater attention were paid to it by government.

The inland trade, by which one province communicates its products and manufactures to another, is generally carried on with ready money; whereas the foreign trade consists more in exchanging and bartering commodities. It is of greater moment than foreigners are aware of; and I can explain this more particularly from what I have observed in London. If a stranger passes through the streets of that extensive metropolis, he will be struck with astonishment, when he sees the riches, and the variety of innumerable kinds of merchandises displayed before his eyes, in thousands of well fitted-up shops; for I believe there is no city in the world which, in this respect, can be compared to London. But this stranger's astonishment will increase, when he observes, that hardly any people enter these shops to buy, a few, perhaps, excepted, wherein millinery, grocery, and some other things are sold. He will be at a loss how to account for the great expences the people are at, who keep these houses and these shops, which indicate riches, and seem to insinuate, that the owners of them are in easy circumstances at least, if not in affluence.



fluence. But it is not the chance-customer that drops in, who supports shops that betray such opulence : it is inland trade, and the distant market which furnishes numbers of buyers, unperceived by him, that passes through the streets of London. I have been told, that there are no less than an hundred and fifty inns in this metropolis, from whence innumerable waggons, loaded with merchandises, set out daily, to carry them into various parts of the kingdom, and which afterwards return in the same manner. Besides, a number of different canals have been made within these fifty years, for the sake of inland navigation ; by which means, land-carriage to the amount of five hundred miles, when computed, is saved, and where one horse can draw as much as forty on the high road. I remember when I first came to London, that the print and picture-shops puzzled me, when I saw numbers of fine prints, many of them elegantly framed and glazed, hung up, and exhibited at the windows, and from time to time new ones on different subjects. I saw numbers of people staring at them, on passing the streets, but I hardly ever observed any body going in to buy. It seemed incomprehensible to me, how such shops, at so vast an expence, could maintain themselves

without any visible customers, till I got acquainted with an eminent print-seller, who, as I was informed, had acquired, within a few years, a great fortune by his business. He explained the matter to me, and cleared up what appeared to be mysterious, by telling me that he sold great quantities of goods in the country; that he sent them to Scotland, to Ireland, to the East and the West-Indies, to America, and to other parts of the world; disposing on an average, weekly, five hundred pounds worth; and that he paid the workmen whom he employed, every Saturday, at the rate of sixty pounds and upwards. It is the same with other shops, wherein other goods are sold, and where a stranger wonders at the costliness and variety of things he sees before him, without hardly perceiving a single purchaser.

As I have just been speaking of the retail-trade, which is carried on in shops, I will mention a circumstance relative to it, which is not common in other countries. On the continent, it is the custom of shopkeepers to ask a price for what they sell, which will bear an abatement; but in England many of the shopkeepers will make no abatement in the price which they first demanded. This, indeed, is the practice of shopkeepers of the best credit,  
and

and of those who are supposed to be the most actuated by principles of integrity. A stranger or a foreigner, who can hardly speak the language, will be perfectly safe in such shops from being overcharged; whereas, on the contrary, upon the continent, in such instances, too much advantage is taken. The practice, however, which prevails in England, to make no abatement, does not always, I believe, proceed from such commendable motives of honesty and integrity, as are to be met with in some shopkeepers. I have been told, that those who deal in the same commodities, frequently agree among themselves about the price for which they will sell, without making afterwards any abatement, though the buyer may think it exorbitant. It may be easily supposed, that in the council where these prices are fixed, justice and equity do not always preside. The splendid manner in which many shopkeepers live, and the short time in which some of them acquire fortunes, are proofs that such a supposition, in many instances, is not ill-founded. Among themselves they sell, as it is called to the trade, a fifth, nay even a fourth part cheaper than to others; from which it appears, that they look upon twenty *per cent.* as a very reasonable profit. It must, however, be admitted, that from

the high rents of shops, the heavy taxes and other expences, considerable profits on some articles seem to be necessary. Bankruptcies are notwithstanding very common, and the London Gazette is always full of them. The credit which is given, and which is the offspring, sometimes of the desire of gain, sometimes of pressing necessities, sometimes of both, is almost incredible. Hence many who, by means of mere credit, set out from nothing, return to the same situation again, only with the honour of having appeared in the Gazette, with the loss of character, and frequently with the stigma of having defrauded others. There are instances, where an honest man, by accumulated misfortunes, becomes a bankrupt, and meets with the pity and compassion of every one possessed of the feelings of humanity ; but it can hardly ever be said, that those are to be ranked among these unfortunate persons, who upon mere credit, and upon hazard, venture upon business, the ruinous and dishonourable exit of which they might have predicted to themselves, without being possessed of a spirit of prophecy. There is another great evil, arising from that unbounded and really destructive credit, more predominant in England than in any other country, which goes under the name of bad  
book-

book-debts. A tradesman and a merchant find great losses at the end of the year, which originate mostly in the credit they have given. To make them up, they charge the honest customer so highly, that he is to pay for the knave, and indemnify them for venturing to give credit to a person whom they trusted, perhaps on no other account but because they balanced the debt of one on whom they could depend, with that of another whose honesty was doubtful. Many a man of principle, and of substance, is jostled in the streets by a person better dressed than himself, who adopts airs of consequence, whose draper's, tailor's, shoemaker's, and other tradesmen's bills, he in part discharges, because the other does not, and he himself happens to be one of their good customers. This certainly, without impropriety, may be called hardship; for the man of character is not only over-rated and loses his money, but he is even deprived of the satisfaction being distinguished from the knave, who, by means of credit, appears, by his expensive way of living, and his more elegant dress, the better man and the man of substance, though he has no just claim to either. I know that things similar to these are to be met with in

## COMMERCE.

all cultivated countries, but no where more so than in England, for no where is credit more easy to be obtained. It is undeniable, that in a commercial nation, such as the English is, credit, and an extensive one too, is necessary, but certainly it ought to be kept within proper bounds. Where is the number of swindlers greater than in England, and where do, particularly, foreign swindlers meet with more success? Supposing it to be true, that credulity is an ingredient of the English character; yet, the eagerness of gain, which is so ready in giving credit, operates more powerfully in favour of the swindler, than a disposition to credulity. The number of bankrupts which seems to increase yearly, reflects no glory on the mercantile part of the nation and it will be increasing, if the banking laws are not made more rigorous, and strictly enforced; if the shame of becoming bankrupt is, as it seems, almost entirely abolished; if certificates are so easily obtained, and credit so easily again obtained, bankrupt, after paying only a few shillings the pound, if even so much, frequently to prosper better than he did before the bounds of credit, and the regul-

bankruptcies in England, want great reformation. We certainly manage these matters better on the continent.

It is said, that nearly 8000 ships are employed in the English commerce, and that half of it is confined to the port of London. For the security of the merchant, the best institutions for insurances are made. There are several public ones, by charter from government, and private insurances are so common, that numbers of insurance-brokers get their livelihood by this kind of business, and some even acquire fortunes by it.

To promote and to facilitate commerce, a public bank, under the name of the Bank of England, was established in the year 1695. The question has been frequently agitated, Whether the institution of a bank be beneficial to a country or detrimental? Those who pretend to have investigated this matter most minutely, are of opinion, that it is profitable for a poor, but not for a rich country. I shall not presume to decide on this question; but I confess, that I do not see how England in her present situation could well be without a bank and paper currency, though the English themselves look upon their country as a rich one, and other nations do the same. It has been alleged,

in commendation of the establishment of the bank of England, that, by its means, the circulation of money is promoted, the interest of it lowered, and the value of landed property raised; that public credit and the strength of government is thereby increased. This last assertion is certainly true; for the nerves of government are grown stronger, by multiplying ready money by means of bank notes, whose value is made equal to gold and silver. There are, however, not wanting persons who are of opinion, that this strength is only external, and that there would be no saving such an edifice of paper wealth, if it should once happen to catch fire. They seem to think, that this paper credit, by internal commotions, or by being extended too much, might be shaken even to ruin, and that the strength of the state, derived from such ideal riches, might unexpectedly be annihilated by a political palsy. It is to be hoped, and to be wished, that those who entertain such ideas may be in the wrong; though it cannot be denied, that the bank would be under a necessity to stop, if only three fourths of its notes were presented for payment within a week. Hitherto, however, the credit of the Bank of England has been unshaken, and its notes are, without hesitation, deemed



deemed equal to ready money, and received as such, not only in the British dominions, but also in many parts of the continent.

The Bank is a corporation, and in some respects to be considered as a trading company. The government business, as far as it relates to the public funds, to loans, to the payment of the various dividends, to the keeping of the account-books, and to many other of these public concerns, is transacted at the Bank, for which the company has, from government, a very handsome yearly income. The Bank likewise, advances money upon the security of stock and lottery tickets; it keeps a discount-office also, by which it is said to gain annually above 600,000 l. Great care is taken that both the drawers and indorsers of such bills may be unexceptionable, and frequently some on the best houses will be rejected, apparently from partiality and mere caprice. There is likewise a bullion-office, where gold and silver is bought, and the Bank takes care to buy it at an inferior price to that which is given by refiners. From these resources, and some others, such as their estates, their funds, their savings in management, the annual income of the company is estimated at more than 900,000 l. and some even will make it a million. If this be true,

and if their dividend, as it is asserted, amounts to little more than 500,000 l. there must be every year an overplus of at least 400,000 l. The true state, however, of the Bank of England, is wrapped up in mysterious darkness; and I have been told, that even not all the directors themselves are admitted behind the curtain, or shewn the caves of Plutus, where the treasures of the company are deposited. So little is the Bank inclined to let the amount of its notes be known, that when the minister lately laid a tax upon all notes and bills of exchange, by subjecting them to a stamp, the company offered to pay 12,000 l. annually, instead of having their bills stamped, which was accepted. Various are the opinions concerning the amount to which the bank issues its notes; but the public will always remain in uncertainty with regard to this point. Some have contended, that the value of those that are in the hands of the public, exceeded fifty millions; but I am, at present, of opinion, that those approach more nearly to the truth, who fix the sum at about twenty; which, indeed, is a great deal, considering that the bullion in the kingdom amounts but to five and twenty millions. It appears, from the nature of the business, that the number and value of

circulating bank-notes cannot, at all times, be equal ; but may differ, even to the amount of millions, at different periods ; and that the sum of ready money, which circulates in the kingdom, is by means of these bank-notes almost doubled.

When, in the year 1780, the great riots happened in London, and the Bank was threatened to be plundered, the company applied to government for a guard of soldiers to protect them, in case of similar instances, which was granted. From that time, likewise, double sets of books are said to have been kept, and one of them, as I have been informed, is every evening deposited in the Tower.

Besides the bank of England, there are a great number of private banking-houses in London, and in the country. I have often wondered how they all can subsist, and some of them acquire great fortunes, since the banking business is rather an expensive one. They pay, however, no interest for the money they are intrusted with ; and it is owing to the large sums belonging to rich people, which they keep often for a long time in their hands, that they indemnify themselves for their trouble and expences, and acquire fortunes. Foreigners, who are not much accustomed to the  
fight

fight of great quantities of gold-coin, will be struck with amazement, when they see how unconcernedly, in bankers-shops, guineas are thrown in large shovels on the counter, and paid away with as much quickness and seeming indifference, as a shop-keeper at Bremen will count his little groats, or a French *merchant* his sols. Perhaps the two latter are as much pleased, when they see a heap of their brazen coin before them, as an Englishman may be, when he beholds a shovel full of gold, being used to the sight of it: so much human happiness and pleasure depend on ignorance and opinion, on custom and education.

It is natural, when I am treating of what relates to commerce, to mention duties and customs; and I will, therefore, add a few words on this subject. In no country can they be greater than in England; no where can they be exacted with more rigour; no where are they made more burthensome to a merchant. Custom-house officers and excise-men, are in no country whatever the best class of people, or such as are much liked, or greatly beloved; and I am certain, that this is the case in England, in a very eminent degree. Their number is immense; and though there  
are

are, undoubtedly, some good and worthy persons among them, yet the greater part consists of people, who never were much inclined to be useful to society by their industry and application. The salaries which they receive from government, are but small, and, therefore, they supply the rest of their wants, and of their support, according to the custom of such people, by various means, which are not altogether calculated to conciliate the favour of those, who, on account of mercantile business, have to do with them. Moreover, since they depend almost entirely on government, they are, when capable of voting, under the necessity of being, on election business, on that side which they are directed to support. Hence it may be explained, why their number is rather increased than lessened<sup>\*</sup>. In the year 1774, the duties collected in the different ports in England and Scotland, amounted to about two millions and a half; but since the contraband trade has been greatly checked, within these few years, the amount of du-

<sup>\*</sup> It ought to be remembered, that this, and the foregoing, was written before the new regulations, in regard to their salaries, fees, perquisites, and right of voting, were made in parliament.

ties is much increased<sup>3</sup>. To support the number of custom-house officers, no less a sum than half a million is said to be required; and if the fees and perquisites, which these people demand of merchants and travellers, that go to or come from foreign countries, are but moderately calculated, more than 250,000 pounds may be added. According to Busching<sup>4</sup>, the whole of the annual state-expenditure in Denmark, amounts not quite to 700,000 pounds, English money; and the income, as I have already mentioned in another place, to a million. In England, therefore, to support the custom-house officers, requires greater expence than a kingdom!

Merchandises, which are imported with a view to export them again, must, nevertheless, pay the duties, and are kept in safe custody in the king's warehouses, till they are shipped for exportation again: but since the price of many, particularly of the produce of the West-

<sup>3</sup> In the year 1788, they amounted to 3,714,477 pounds. —According to the parliamentary journals, in the year 1694, under James I. they were altogether no more than 127,000 pounds, of which the port of London alone furnished 110,000 pounds. Hume's Hist. of Eng. vol. vi. p. 23.

<sup>4</sup> Geography, vol. i. part i. p. 31. *German edition.*

India islands, and East-India goods, would be enormous, and prevent their being bought in foreign markets, if the high duties remained on them, a draw-back is allowed by government, that the exporters may be enabled to sell these goods at the same price as other nations. Government must do this from necessity, but it certainly gains honour by the bounties which are granted by parliament, on the exportation of several produces of industry, to encourage agriculture and manufactures. It will, however, even in this respect, happen, that sometimes the general good is sacrificed to private interest: I shall quote only one instance. Some years ago, during the late war, raw sugars, from the English West-India islands, were scarce, and very dear. The London sugar-refiners, most of them Germans, could hardly, at high prices, supply the English market, much less were they able to work for exportation. At one time they were even under a necessity to work only some days in the week, for want of raw sugars, notwithstanding great quantities of prize-sugars were carried into English ports. They applied to parliament to permit part of the prize-sugars to be sold, that they might be enabled to carry on their business with more vigour; but the West-India planters and  
merchants,

merchants, wishing to have the home-market, as usual, to themselves, and to keep up the high prices, which to them were a source of great gain, they rendered the petition of the sugar-refiners ineffectual. The consequence was, that foreigners had sugar cheaper than the English: that the sugar-refiners were obliged to let their work stand still for some days in the week, and that the planters, together with the West-India merchants, grew rich. Thus the good intentions of the legislature are obstructed; and, to gratify the selfishness of a few, many, nay, sometimes the whole public, become sufferers.

I cannot help observing, that this wise and learned nation have thought proper to lay heavy duties on all foreign learning, which is imported in books at the custom-house, and is paid for by the weight. A ponderous, dull folio, is of far greater value in the custom-house scales, than genuine wit and true refinement contained in a neat octavo or duodecimo. That English books printed or reprinted on the continent, should be prevented, by a heavy duty, from being imported, to the detriment of English authors, printers, booksellers, or bookbinders, is very just and necessary; but I do not see any reason for making the importation of foreign  
6 pub-



publications, which are never republished in England, so extremely costly, difficult, and troublesome. This is an impediment thrown in the way of the progress of learning, and a hardship under which the learned themselves are laid. At the custom-house so little indulgence, even in trifles, is to be met with, that, if the whole of the duty, amounts but to a penny, which would be readily paid six times over, it is to be entered in the most expensive manner. I remember that some years ago, two little German pamphlets, of the size of an English Magazine, in a blue cover, were sent to me from Hamburgh, and a ship-broker, on seeing them directed to me, drew up, without my knowing it, a petition that they might be delivered, which he presented at the custom-house, where they, however, were ordered to be entered. The broker told me, that the duty, according to the weight of the pamphlets, would hardly amount to a half-penny, and the custom-house fees to about five shillings. As the original value of both pamphlets was only fifteen pence, I took the advice of prudence and œconomy, and sacrificed fifteen pence to save five shillings, and a great deal of trouble besides, by leaving my pamphlets in the hands of the custom-house officers. Here, indeed,

indeed, is great room for just and pertinent remarks; but I will abstain from making them, and only ask two questions:—First, Is a man, who ought to pay only four pence or six pence duty, which the law requires, bound in justice and equity, to lose five shillings in fees, if he wishes to receive his property? Secondly—Should no distinction be made between things, particularly trifling ones, entered at the custom-house, upon oath, for a man's own use, and those brought in for sale and commerce? Indeed, the Muses will never pronounce a panegyric on any custom-house whatever, much less on that in London. I have been told, that a learned foreigner had invented a mathematical instrument, of which the great Newton entertained a high opinion, and had formed great expectations. The Royal Society received one as a present, and sir Isaac hearing of its arrival, was so eager to see and secure it, that he himself hastened to the custom-house, to fetch it away. The duty it was subject to, was to be paid *ad valorem*, and the president of the Royal Society being asked how much its value might be, answered, contrary to his usual manner, with some warmth; *What do you mean? Do you think I could ascertain its value? It is of immense value.*

*value.* Upon this, the custom-house officers fixed their own price, which was by far more than the Royal Society thought it worth. However, the duty was paid, and the Society took care, that the great calculator should never afterwards transact their custom-house business.

In whatever country the duties, with which commerce is burdened, are high, contraband trade will be carried on accordingly. I have before observed, that in no country custom-house duties are higher, and exacted with more rigour, than in England. The natural consequence must be, that smuggling is nowhere carried on with greater assiduity and spirit, and with a higher hand, than on the coasts of Great Britain. She can give the best lessons to those who have the management of duties and excise, not to hurt, or even to ruin the state or its strength, by a far-extended greediness, and by oppressions. Necessity and hope of gain render people ingenious, artful, bold, and enterprising. The man acted very absurdly, who had a hen that laid golden eggs, and who, after killing her, cut her up, to enrich himself the sooner. In England, sad experience, in this respect, has taught her ministers of finances more wisdom, and a be-

Vol. I. P ginning

ginning has been made to check the smuggling trade, by lowering some of the custom-house duties; by which means both the state and the honest tradesman, are become gainers.

It is astonishing, and hardly credible, to what an extent, and with what success, the smuggling trade has been carried on, within these few years. Ships from thirty to three-hundred tons, which carried from six to four and twenty guns, were employed in it, and navigated by bold sailors, from twelve to a hundred<sup>3</sup>. The king's ships, fitted out against the smuggling trade, which carry seldom more than ten or twelve guns, were unable to engage any of the larger smuggling vessels, and were obliged to sheer off, when they happened to come in sight of them. They have even been pursued, attacked, and sunk by them; or, if they were taken by the smuggler, the crew of the king's ships have been made prisoners, and dismissed afterwards, when the smuggler had deposited his goods in safety. Formerly, there were no less than about a hundred and twenty of the great smuggling

<sup>3</sup> Reports from the committee, appointed to inquire into the illicit practices used in defrauding the revenue. London, 1784.

vessels,

vessels, and very near two hundred of the smaller ones. The number of both has diminished, since a new method of checking the smuggling trade, as much as possible, has been adopted by government, under the sanction of parliament.

Tea, wine, brandy, and other sorts of spirits, tobacco, East-India goods, cambricks, lace and silks, are the common merchandise for smugglers. Their principal vessels made, perhaps, six or eight voyages in one year to the coast of France, or Flanders, and returned thence always deeply laden. Since the larger vessels are well provided with guns, they often take smaller ones of their trade under their protection; and if a custom-house cutter happens to meet them, the greater smuggling vessel begins an engagement, to give the smaller ones time and opportunity to escape, and to provide for their safety.

The contraband traders having agreed about the signals at sea, with their friends on the coast, the latter assemble in great numbers, with various sorts of weapons, as soon as these signals are given, and oblige the custom-house officers, if they should present themselves, to be mere spectators, unless they are supported by the military. In this case, however, the

smugglers, who are on land, give signals to those at sea, to stretch about twenty miles higher on the coast, where they generally, during the night, land their goods, whilst their friends on shore immediately set about providing for the security of them. Waggon, pack-horses, and every thing is ready to carry the landed merchandises to the places of their destination, which are mostly the villages round about London, whence, during the night-time, the metropolis is provided. Nay, I have frequently seen, on the public roads leading to London, at mid-day, gangs of smugglers, between fifteen and twenty, mounted on the best horses, provided with pistols and cutlasses, carrying their contraband goods behind their saddles in packages, and sufficiently resolute to repel any excise or custom-house officers, who should attempt to stop them. If these should happen to have soldiers along with them for assistance, bloody engagements will ensue, and many on both sides will lose their lives.

This contraband trade is carried on not only as a kind of warfare, but likewise as a well-regulated commercial business. There is not only regular book-keeping, but even proper riders are sent about, from time to time,

time, in their respective districts, to take commissions. The freight, and even the insurance, is settled by them, in case any persons should not be inclined to run the risk, fearing that their goods might be seized. Those who do not insure, get their commodities generally for half the price which they cost when they are entered at the custom-house, and the duties properly paid. Those who insure have them delivered for about two thirds.

The lowering of the duties on tea and coffee, on wine, brandy, rum, and other spirituous liquors, has greatly checked smuggling, and increased the revenues of government, by custom-house duties; but the contraband trade is, notwithstanding, carried on briskly. The custom-house officers may, indeed, in great measure, prevent smuggling on the arrival of packet-boats and ships that enter a port; but their efforts against those powerful smuggling vessels, and their associates on shore, whom I have mentioned, are weak. It is, likewise, very difficult to prevent that kind of smuggling, which is carried on by fishing-boats at sea. Goods, particularly such as are bought at the sales of the East-India company, and which, on exportation, receive a draw-back, are frequently, by these fishing-

P 3

boats,

boats, or some other small vessels, that wait on purpose at a little distance from the coast, brought back in the night time, and sold of course cheaper, than those which have not had the benefit of a drawback.

How much the contraband trade has increased, and how expensive it is for government to prevent it, appears from the number of king's ships, which amount to more than forty, and which are cruising on the British coast, merely to watch the smuggling vessels. Some of them approach the rank of frigates, and to keep up a proper force against smugglers, requires no less than 4235 seamen, and more than 220,000 l. to maintain them.

On the coast of Scotland, contraband trade is carried on more briskly than on the English. Smuggling vessels are continually going backwards and forwards, between the eastern coast of Scotland and that of Holland, and Flanders, between Copenhagen, Gothenburg, and other places. They fetch rum, French and other sorts of brandy, wine, and tea. The worst is, that this kind of traffic is carried on not by barter, but with ready money, some English wool perhaps excepted, though its exportation is prohibited under severe penalties. The Faro-islands in the North, are well situated for carrying on a  
con-



contraband trade between Denmark and Scotland; and I have been informed, that it is done pretty briskly. At the western islands, which belong to Scotland, vessels occasionally arrive from Virginia, for the purpose of smuggling tobacco; and by large rowing-boats, a contraband trade is kept up between Scotland and Ireland. The fishing-vessels on the Scotch coast are likewise very useful to smugglers. For the sake of contraband trade societies are formed in the north of Scotland, who have always horses, waggon, and a number of people ready on the coast to be instantly at hand, when smuggling vessels appear at sea, and give signals for landing goods. Should there be any danger on account of custom-house officers, a number of resolute sailors and others, convey the goods up the country till they are safely deposited.

Within these few years, tea has been one of the principal articles for smuggling; because high duties and excise were inducements to it. The original price of tea, as it is bought in China, is but trifling, though in England the consumer pays, for the most common sort of tea, at the rate of an hundred *per cent.*<sup>9</sup>. If

<sup>9</sup> It ought to be remembered, that this was written before the commutation-act was made.

therefore, the smuggler buys it duty free, and sells it again for half the price, which a grocer who has paid the duty sells it for, he may be sure of gaining at least forty *per cent.* by it. This, indeed, may be called encouragement to get riches by smuggling, and an inducement to prosecute it, held out by the government.

The consumption of tea in England is astonishing; it is three times greater than that of all the rest of Europe put together. Some years ago the East-India company used to import annually not much less than six millions of pounds of tea from China: at present, since the commutation-tax has taken place, the quantity is doubled. Millions of pounds, besides, are even now smuggled in; and I do not doubt, but that, notwithstanding all the vigilance of custom-house and excise-officers, some millions of pounds of leaves, grown on shrubs and trees in England, are used to adulterate and to mix with the tea that is imported from China.

The rage of tea-drinking among all ranks of people in England, is beyond conception. Two hundred years ago nobody in Europe was acquainted with the use of this drug, which is now numbered among the necessaries of life, even of poor people in England, particularly among women. Whoever considers  
with

with some attention, this enormous tea-drinking in a political view, and with regard to the health of those that use themselves to it, cannot but join with Dr. Tiffot<sup>1</sup> in opinion, that it would be one of the greatest benefits that could be bestowed upon all Europe, if the importation of tea from China were prohibited. But this certainly will not be done in England, at least not very speedily. Tea-drinking is now not only a fashion, but it is a settled custom, and not easily abolished. Besides, it is to some people, for certain purposes, extremely beneficial. Government, by means of duties, and the excise on tea, raises about 1,200,000 pounds annually from all classes of people.

The East-India company also cannot but greatly recommend tea-drinking, for it gains great sums of money by it; and what would grocers do, if it were not for the consumption of tea? Dr. Tiffot, as a philanthropist and a physician, may declare against its importation into Europe; but he will find very few London physicians on his side. The English are very much inclined to nervous disorders, which, for the benefit of apothecaries, chemists, and doctors, are much promoted by the tea-leaves, or

<sup>1</sup> On the Diseases of Literary Persons, p. 120. German Edit.

at least by the warm water that accompanies them. The bakers, and those who deal in butter, would likewise exclaim against the non-importation of tea; for the English say, that drinking tea, without eating with it, is very unwholesome. In cottages, therefore, and in the kitchen among servants, as well in the parlour and drawing-room, tea is never served without the assistance of bread and butter. Politicians, philosophers, and patriots, talk and write of the necessity of alleviating the burdens of the people; and yet they do not seem much to regard, that more than a million of pounds sterling is levied by a tax on tea. They urge the necessity of keeping the money in the country, and yet seem to be but little concerned that the East-India company sends, annually, at least a million in pure silver to China, for the purchase of little leaves. They prove the obligation which government is under to preserve the health of the people; and yet do not care how much tea-drinking is encouraged, though eminent physicians have asserted that it corrodes the nervous system of the body, and weakens the constitution. But, whoever has in the least observed, how much wise theoretical instructions are praised, and how little they are generally practised, will not wonder, that.

that, notwithstanding all reasoning against the importation of tea, it is not only continued, but annually increased; that the monopoly of the East-India company is supported, and that very few people grumble at the heavy taxes which they are to pay, because they must drink tea. Whoever is dissatisfied with the commutation-tax, or wishes to lessen his contribution towards it, very composedly pays for the stopping up of his windows, and thinks he has gained a victory over the tax-makers, by excluding the rays of light from his dwelling. The minister in the mean time smiles at the little revenge, which they take at their own expence, by depriving themselves of day-light. He is happy, that the generality of those who pay taxes are but indifferent calculators; otherwise they would have found out how well this commutation tax is adapted to increase the revenues. The minister, when he first brought the bill for this tax into parliament, calculated the importation of tea by the East-India company, at that time, to amount to five millions and a half of pounds in weight, which produced to government annually, in entries, 750,000 l. sterling. He asserted, that by lowering the duties this sum would be reduced to 160,000 l.; but acknowledged, at the same time, that

that the new produce of the additional window-tax would amount to 900,000 l. He owned, therefore, that government, by sacrificing not full half a million, on lowering the duties, gained, instead of it, by the commutation-tax, more than a million.

It should farther be remembered, that the East-India company, on account of the lowering of the duties on tea, and checking the smuggling of it, is enabled to import almost double the quantity that it did before; and that, of course, the duties which it pays to government are nearly doubled also. The minister, therefore, got by his bill, very near a million and a half of revenue for tea-drinking; and the generality of tea-drinkers seemed to trouble themselves very little about his, or the East-India company's profits. Rejoicing that they could buy teas for about a third less than before, they forgot the commutation-tax, and gloried in the liberty of blocking up their windows. I own that I expected great marks of discontent when the commutation-tax was introduced; but nothing more happened than what I have mentioned.

Smuggled goods, after being seized, are publicly sold at the custom-houses, without duties; but generally at such high rates, that  
it

it may be said duties were included. Some contraband goods are not to be sold at all, but by law ordered to be burnt. Foreign embroideries of gold and silver are particularly subject to furnish materials for this strange kind of bon-fires. I saw once among many other elegant and precious things, which were condemned to the fire, a very fine fur, embroidered with gold, and lined with the most beautiful fables. Somebody offered to a custom-house officer, who was to see judgment upon the condemned goods executed, thirty guineas, if he would let him cut out the fables ; but he had no power to give such leave, tempting as the offer was ; and the fine fables, though not contraband, were thrown into the flames, because they had the misfortune to be sewed, as lining, under the embroidery.

ON

## ON MANUFACTURES.

IT might be expected, since I have spoken on trade and commerce in general, that I should say something on manufactures in particular. To be minute and circumstantial in these matters, is very difficult, and contrary to my intention. Among the English themselves, I have heard complaints, that nothing satisfactory, and which could be depended upon, has been written upon this subject, which requires infinite pains to become acquainted with, even to a moderate degree. There happen, besides, within a few years, so many alterations and changes in these things, that nothing, which is written about them, can remain true and certain for a long time.

The principal English manufactures are those of wool, leather, flax, hemp, glass, paper, porcelain, cotton, silk, lead, tin, iron, and steel. Potteries, breweries, distilleries, and cyder, may likewise be reckoned among the manufactures.

I have seen many accounts of the estimate of the present value of the British manufactures. They seem upon the whole to agree, though



though they differ in trifles. These estimates run very high, and I must confess, that several articles which I have met with in them, appeared to me, as they were stated, to be improbable ; though I do not presume to dispute the truth of them. The woollen manufactures are valued by some at sixteen millions and above ; those in leather at more than ten ; those in flax and hemp at two millions and a half ; in silk above three millions ; in glass, paper, and porcelain at a million and a half ; in cotton, very near a million. In short, it would not be difficult to produce a sum above fifty millions of pounds sterling, according to these calculations, as the estimate of only the principal manufactures.

It is said, that about five millions of people, though this seems incredible, employ themselves and are employed in them. Some get rich, others procure a livelihood, such as it is. Very near a million of people are engaged in the iron, lead, and tin, and a million and a half in the woollen manufacture. Supposing each person thus employed, earned, on an average, the whole year round, only six pounds sterling, though some earn thousands, it would put thirty millions into circulation.

This produce of English industry, paper, silk, and porcelain, perhaps, excepted, is in  
great

great repute, and the preference which almost every where is given to English manufactures against those of other countries, is a sufficient proof of it; though it seems as if this predilection began to abate. Of late years it has been objected to English manufactures, particularly those in woollen, that they have decreased in their intrinsic value, notwithstanding the price of them has risen. Some English cloth-manufacturers with whom I have conversed on this subject, have acknowledged, that their cloth was not now of the intrinsic value which it was formerly, but that the demand for it was greater than formerly, and that therefore the prices were risen. As for the increased sale, it is, I suppose, to be understood in regard to the English market; which really is not surprising. In former times, people of some consequence and fortune, thought themselves to appear very decently, if they had every year a new suit of cloaths, but at present three and more are annually required by a man in a middling station of life, who wishes to make what is called only a decent appearance. Besides the fashions alter in these days so much, that a man can hardly wear a coat two months, before it is out of fashion. No wonder, therefore, that the clothiers find,  
that

that the demand of their manufactures has increased, and that they can even raise the price of them without exciting murmur, though their merchandise is of less intrinsic value. Those frequent changes of fashion, in regard to dress and furniture, are a great support of British manufactures; they promote trade, and keep all sorts of tradesmen employed; they increase the pride, the wants, and the cares of families, and procure employment for others; they are beneficial to government by imposts and taxes; they are the principal links in those golden chains of folly, by which men, without knowing it, suffer themselves to be bound, and to renounce, insensibly, their natural liberty and independence.

The iron, steel, and metal manufactures of Birmingham and Sheffield are sent to almost all parts of the globe. It is astonishing to see how far the art is carried to lessen labour and time, to make dispatch, and by these means to be enabled to sell cheap. Watch-chains, buttons, knives, and thousands of other things, are made with incredible facility; and pass, within a short time, through some hundred hands, before they arrive to their perfection. No less than forty different hands are busied about the metal which produces a needle.

Children, seven years old, are employed in some manufactories, and may earn half a crown a week, which in some respects accounts for the cheapness of things manufactured, and how it is that families, notwithstanding the apparently small wages of their labour, can maintain themselves.

These manufactories are dispersed over the whole kingdom. In the counties of Norfolk and Suffolk, in Yorkshire, and in some western counties, those in wool are mostly to be met with. Bristol has manufactories in glass, and Staffordshire is known for its earthen-ware and its potteries. Yet, I may say, that almost the fourth part of English manufactories is in London and its environs; nay, of some it seems as if they had their home in the metropolis. Watch-makers, jewellers, gold and silver-workers, printers, book-binders, silk-weavers, and sugar-refiners, are particularly of this number. This unequal proportion between the metropolis and the rest of the whole country, is no doubt detrimental. It needs no arguments to prove, that the good quality of manufactures and their cheapness contribute greatly to their being demanded, and consequently promote the flourishing of the manufactures themselves. As to cheapness, it is impos-

impossible to obtain that in London, where every thing is excessively dear, and where, consequently, the wages of the workmen must be greater than in those parts of the kingdom which are remote from the capital, and living, of course, must be cheaper. House-rent is almost double in London to what it is elsewhere. Fuel, to which sea-coals belong in particular, is four, nay five times dearer than in the northern and some other parts of the kingdom. Moreover, some manufactories in London, render the neighbourhood where they are established unwholesome; and the numberless opportunities and bad examples for leading a dissolute life, which are not so frequent in distant parts of the country, too much infect the workmen, and consequently promote poverty, illnesses, and mortality among them. It would, therefore, undoubtedly be for the advantage of such manufactories if they, by degrees and unperceived, were removed into distant and cheaper parts of the country. To attempt any such thing quickly and forcibly, would be imprudent, and, perhaps, raise disturbances in London; but if the owners themselves did establish their manufactories at a distance from the metropolis, they would soon find how beneficial it would be to their workmen, and

how advantageous to themselves. The great improvements made, in later years, in regard to the carriage of goods by water, on canals, would greatly facilitate such local alterations for the benefit of manufactories. During my time, more than once, disturbances have arisen from the silk-weavers, which might have been of serious consequences, because they either were out of employ, or they justly complained that so many French silks were smuggled into the kingdom. The English silk manufactures, it is said, do not equal the French, neither in richness nor beauty of patterns, though they are proportionably higher in price. To free the English silks at least from this last objection, it would greatly contribute towards it, if manufactories were established in Yorkshire or Cumberland, where already some successful attempts of that kind have been made. Speaking here of silks, I shall just mention, that all raw silk for the English manufactories is dearly bought in China, and other countries whose natural produce it is. The English export their fine and comfortable woollen cloth, which the Turkish and Asiatic ladies prefer to all their silks; they import instead of it the spinnings of foreign worms, to form a dress of it, in which they freeze, it being never calculated for

for their climate. The wise might here ask, Is it not strange, that people should give the preference to foreign things, for which they pay so dearly, when they have those which are better, and more comfortable at home? But whoever would seriously remonstrate in such matters, where fashion has given its sanction to folly, might be sure that the multitude, who care not for wisdom, would laugh at him as loud as at the dog that barked at the moon.

It is said of the English, that they are not endowed with great talents for invention; but, whoever has seen the manufactories at Birmingham, and in many other places, will be easily convinced, that such an assertion is to be made with caution; and that they, certainly, are the most ingenious to improve inventions already made, to render them more perfect. And if inventions are frequently owing to accidents, the improving upon them requires sometimes more ingenuity, and assiduous meditation, than the invention itself. With more foundation, perhaps, it is said, that the English manufacturers, particularly those who employ themselves in articles of luxury, do it with less taste than some other nations, particularly their neighbours the French. It has been asserted, that they shew this want of taste much in their

drawings, their designs, and patterns. For this reason they have been obliged, either to procure these things from abroad, or to engage Frenchmen to work for them. I myself have known some, who for such purposes were employed and well paid by English manufacturers in the cotton and calico-printing, or the silk-weaving business. The royal academy of painting, sculpture, and architecture, was, some years ago, instituted for the purpose of removing this want, to make the principles of good taste more known in England, and to form her artists after them. It has been remarked also, that since the institution of this academy, the English manufactories have been benefited by it. The manufacturers at Birmingham, especially those that are in the toy-business, have been very successful in imitating the French; and the French themselves have been gainers by it. The English manufacturer works neater than the Frenchman, and when he has a pattern before him to work by, he generally executes the copy in a more finished style than the original itself can boast. Many Birmingham toys are sent over to Paris, where pretended English connoisseurs will pay double the money for them, on a supposition that they are French-made, and consequently, as the produce of Parisian genius,



genius, superior to any of London or Birmingham. One of these conceited arbiters of taste had bought a snuff-box at Paris, and returning to his own country, shewed it on passing through Birmingham, to a manufacturer there. As a traveller of taste and experience, he asked him with a kind of sneer, "Why cannot you do these things in an elegant French *gout* like this?" How much might you pay for this box? asked the manufacturer, modestly. Only four Louis, was the answer. Sir, replied the other, I sold this box, and many more, to the man who has so grossly imposed upon you, for only half a guinea each. This threw the connoisseur into an immoderate fit of laughter; upon which the manufacturer asked him, whether he would permit him to cut the cover of the box, if he presented him with another of equal value and goodness? This offer was accepted; and the manufacturer, on tearing part of the cover, shewed him his name, and the place of his residence, which was concealed there. This has been related to me as a real fact; and the deceptions of this kind are very numerous.

It was once proposed to have a committee of overseers over manufactories, who should take care that the produce of them was of the requisite goodness and quality, because

it has been observed, that foreigners have lessened their demands of English manufactures, because their intrinsic value was not the same as formerly. But as it has been objected, that such a kind of tribunal was inconsistent with the liberty of a manufacturer and of trade, it never was established. I will not deny, that sometimes the English manufacturer will play his tricks, and that the intrinsic value of some manufactures is lessened; but I wish, at the same time, in justice to the English, to say, that they often deal in a very honourable manner, without any deceit, and without imposing inferior commodities upon their customers, when they have a right to expect such as are of the best kind. But foreign dealers and merchants will sometimes give commissions for goods of an inferior sort, and afterwards sell them as if they were of the best, and charge the price accordingly. To prove this, I will mention only one instance, which came within my own knowledge. German tradesmen, not of the most honest class, have given orders for making callimancoes of an inferior quality, though they desired them to be made, as to outward appearance, as if they had been of the best kind. Some manufacturers have rejected such orders with disdain, as degrading their character;

ter; others, perhaps, equally honest, have, out of complaisance to their customers, complied with their desire, and lessened the price which they charged considerably, thinking that those abroad would do the same, in regard to their customers; which, however, they have not done; but asked the same price as if they were the best callimancoes; and by these means injured the repute of such English manufactures. In cases like this, the Englishman is certainly free from all kind of blame, and the German tradesman is the impostor, who injures not only the manufacturer, and the produce of his industry, but wrongs also his own customer. Besides, many foreigners, French, Germans, and others, have within some years past, come over to England as spies, whose intention was no other than to be admitted, by means of letters of recommendation which they had obtained, into English manufactories; and to take the advantage of English honesty and openness, to examine the machines and tools of their invention, which they make use of, and to pry into the mysteries of their arts, that after having stolen as much as they could, they might return to their own country, and establish, in a very imperfect manner, manufactures of the same kind, the produce of which is  
some-

sometimes imposed upon the unwary for English. To succeed in such nefarious purposes, they, though forbidden under great penalties, entice if they can, by means of great promises, which are seldom kept, British artificers to leave their country, and to assist them in their new undertakings. Such transactions are certainly the most unfair that can be met with in the commercial line; and the English manufacturers are rather to be praised than to be blamed, if from motives of prudence, taught by disagreeable experience, they have of late looked shy upon such foreigners, and received them, even when recommended, with coldness and mistrust.

It is not many years since the English have recovered from those prejudices, which could not but obstruct the progress of manufactures. One of them is that opposition which was shewn against the use of machines to save labour, to render the work easy, and to make dispatch. It was thought, that poor people were deprived by them of employment to gain their bread, and that it was better to set numbers to work than that one person, by means of a machine, should do with ease the work of many, who were to be left idle. From such a supposition a saw-mill, which was erected,

erected, about a hundred years ago, near London, was demolished again, that the labouring poor might not be deprived of employment. Upon the same principle, a tumult was ready to break out among the spinners in Lancashire, because some manufacturers wanted to introduce a new invented wheel, constructed upon such a plan, that one person could spin six threads of cotton at one time. Had it not been for some men of sense, who took pains to persuade and convince these people, that it would be for their own interest and advantage to make use of this kind of spinning-wheels, they never would have suffered them to be introduced. At present, as I have been informed, they are so well convinced of the usefulness of them, and the folly of their prejudice, that, perhaps, riots would ensue, if an attempt were made to prohibit them. All sorts of machines that can be beneficial are now introduced, improved by time, and new ones invented. Mills, set in motion by wind, water, fire, and steam, are most ingeniously constructed; and most successfully used to facilitate and accelerate various kinds of work. And, indeed, if the English will sell their manufactures at as low prices as other nations, nay even cheaper, it is, on account of the dearness of provisions

and of labour, impossible for them to obtain this end otherwise than by the use of machines. The quicker, and the less expensively they can work, and the more they can finish, without hurting the goodness of its quality, the cheaper they will sell, and of course dispose of a greater quantity of goods. The manufacturer will employ a greater number of workmen, and pay them good wages ; he will bring money into quicker circulation, and sooner grow rich. However, notwithstanding all that I have said in favour of the use of machines, care should be taken, that the poor are not deprived of labour, and one man not be suffered to enrich himself by substituting mechanical arts where industry was before employed, not caring whether the poor around him were starving for want of work. I have been told, that in some instances, the use of machines is carried so far, that where before fifty people were employed and obtained a maintenance, at present not five are wanted, because the industry of forty-five is superseded by mechanism. Humanity and government should in such instances interfere, and either prohibit the too far extended use of machines, or devise other ways and means to employ the industry of the poor. I remember to have  
some-

somewhere read, 'that the famous father Tournemine, who lived in the beginning of this century at Paris, persuaded himself of the possibility of making a particular kind of organ, which, when played, would have the same effect upon men as the best eating and drinking; that it would gratify the appetite, and give strength to the body. Supposing that this scheme of folly could seriously have been executed, and such organs were introduced into England, and come into general use, to the great detriment of taxes and excise, because people could then dispense with eating and drinking, would the chancellor of the exchequer not have tried every means to prevent the use of such machines, because he would soon have found his coffers empty? Indeed, the parallel, between the machines that deprive the poor of the means to get a livelihood, and that which, if it were possible, would starve the minister of finances, is a very true one; only with this difference, that in the first instance humanity would shed tears, and in the other smile at the death of the excise.

Another prejudice from which the English are recovered, is the opinion, that by digging canals, and by promoting inland navigation, for the sake of carrying manufactures and the  
pro-

produce of one province to another, many would be sufferers, who had gained their living by being employed in land-carriage. At present, every one is convinced of the great utility and convenience attending the carriage of merchandises by water upon canals, which is not only less troublesome, but also much cheaper. New canals, therefore, are dug in all parts of the kingdom; and rivers, by means of them, joined, where it can be done. This saves a number of horses, which are expensive to maintain; and goods are not only more cheaply conveyed from one place to the other, but also with greater safety, and less danger of damage. Indeed, the usefulness of such canals is at present not only readily acknowledged, but, it is even thought a subject of surprise, that people could have been so long insensible of their advantages, and backward in promoting them.

The great quantity and variety of English manufactures, requires a number of purchasers, among whom they are to be disposed of. Within the realm, the consumption is undoubtedly the most considerable; but the exportation is the great object to be kept in sight; for it is the support of foreign trade, it brings foreign money into the kingdom, it employs thousands of hands, which would otherwise be idle; and it  
pro-



procures bread to numbers of families, who would be distressed, if they did not work for foreign countries. All European nations are more or less supplied with British manufactures, but by far the greater part goes to the East and the West Indies and to America. The American consumption was formerly very great indeed, but it is no more so now, since so great a part of the colonies are become independent, and begin to establish manufactures themselves, which will not only diminish the demand of the British, but, perhaps, will in time rival them. However, if this should happen, it will be, in all probability, more the concern of the next generation than of the present.

It may be easily conceived, from what I have said on British commerce and manufactures, how advantageous they are to the kingdom in its present situation, and how necessary it is that both, for the welfare of the state, should be encouraged, and by all means rendered flourishing. Manufactures promote industry, and devise a hundred methods to those who will work, to support themselves and their families. They increase luxury, and with that the revenues of government, by multiplying imposts and taxes, which are paid by buyers and consumers as well as by the manufacturers themselves.

selves. Part of the produce of the industry of the nation, being exported to foreign countries, enriches it; and thousands, employed at home, in useful occupations, are kept from idleness, and out of mischief. Being engaged in labour, burdened with taxes, and surrounded with the cares of the world, they do not think of disturbing the peace. In some respects it might even be said, that manufactories are more conducive to population than the harder and more enervating labours of agriculture.

That question which is so frequently agitated, Whether agriculture or manufactories are to be preferred, may be considered on different sides, and consequently answered differently. The necessities of life are undoubtedly of greater consequence than the conveniences of it, or the comfortableness and elegance of dress. Agriculture has, therefore, in this view undoubtedly, the preference; and if the soil of a country be so fertile, as not only amply to maintain its inhabitants, but even to leave a great deal for exportation, it would be very impolitic to neglect these riches of nature, and to encourage manufactures in preference. But where both are happily united, and can be turned to advantage for the country, it is so much the more beneficial

neficial, considering the relative connexion in which civilized nations are placed with regard to each other. Many countries, among which England particularly may be reckoned, have not only sufficient but even more than is necessary to maintain their inhabitants, and make them happy with their national produce. Since, however, the absence of riches, according to the common way of thinking, is supposed to be a misfortune, something is still wanting towards happiness; or, to speak more properly, we wish to increase our cares and necessities, we long for plenty of money, to live more splendidly and to multiply our imaginary wants and our ungovernable desires. This is a maxim that the English have in common with other nations, but which they generally stretch to the utmost.

Some countries, on account of their barrenness, put their inhabitants under a necessity of trying, by means of manufactures and the exportation of them, to get a little money, to buy the necessities of life from their neighbours who have more than they want. England, on the contrary, is so happily provided for by the bountiful hand of nature, as to possess not only every thing to satisfy all reasonable demands for the support and comfortableness of

life, but even to be enabled to supply other nations with her abundance, and to draw from them money for the produce of her soil, as well as for her manufactures. In this respect, therefore, England has the advantage of a double strength ; first, that which she derives from agriculture and rural œconomy ; and afterwards that from her commerce and her manufactures. When, in former times, Tyre and Carthage, and in modern ages Venice, Genoa, and Holland, by means of trade and navigation, obtained a great weight in the balance of power, respect, and riches among nations, it needs no demonstration, that if the sources begin to dry up, the consequence of the state must necessarily sink, because it loses its internal strength. This can never be the fate of England, which does not shine like a meteor, but must always retain her true splendor and internal strength, arising from the blessings of her own soil, though her foreign trade should fail, which, however, cannot happen, since she possesses, within herself, most of the raw materials for her principal manufactures.

I have observed, that several modern British writers, who have made the political state of England the subject of their inquiries, take  
6 great

great pains to establish an opinion, as if Great Britain had, by no means, attained hitherto the summit of her power and splendor, and that a century would first elapse, before that period arrived. I confess, I cannot persuade myself of the truth of this assertion. Riches, power, and what is called glory, are relative notions. Among private persons and families, as well as among nations, they refer to circumstances and situations. It may be that England, by her navigation, commerce, and manufactures, acquires a greater plenty of money; it may happen that she increases her navy and her armies, and becomes to be more dreaded, envied, and hated by other nations; it is possible that her landed interest, her luxury, her imposts and taxes increase<sup>s</sup>; but is it to be expected, that the British nation will proportionably become more happy than others? People who adopt this way of thinking, and who talk

<sup>s</sup> I should be almost inclined to think, that all those means, which are used to raise England, as it is pretended, to the summit of wealth and power, fall under the denomination of unnatural proceedings, and of course must stop the sooner. A fire which, by violent and continual blowing, is raised to a great flame, will the sooner extinguish and consume itself. Credit given beyond limits, and a national debt stretched to the utmost, cannot but terminate in an insolvency. The bow, when strained too much, will break at last.

in such a strain, seem to forget, that true happiness does not consist in mere imagination, but is as *unique* in its kind, as truth itself. The latter may differ in regard to the degrees of light and shade in which it is seen by intelligent beings; the former admits likewise of degrees in which it is perceived and enjoyed; but, in fact, and by nature, truth is but one, and with happiness it is the same. On this supposition, therefore, I hope to meet with indulgence, when I venture to say, paradoxical as it may appear, that the ancient Britons, in Cæsar's time, without brilliant manufactures, and an extensive commerce, might be deemed to have been equally happy with the present English; perhaps more so. I readily grant, that they were infinitely poorer than those who call themselves, in our days, Britons; but it should be remembered, that their wants were very few. They underwent neither the troubles nor the dangers, which attend those who are in pursuit of riches; they knew nothing of the cares to keep them, nor of the plagues which attend those, who spend them in a fashionable manner, to procure to themselves an imaginary happiness, which they find in the end to be an empty phantom. The ancient Britons could easily satisfy their wants, and bear hardships  
and

and adversities more patiently and with more indifference than our modern English, who are much given to suicide, and many of whom, notwithstanding their riches, their affluence, and their pride, lay violent hands on themselves as well as the wretched, which I presume was not the case among the English of old. The great, so very unequally divided, and partly imaginary riches, reduce the greatest part of the nation to a state of necessity, since living is so extravagantly dear, and more than half of what the middling people spend for their support, goes towards government's taxes and imposts. Sometimes necessity, sometimes the interest of the nation, sometimes honour, sometimes national pride, sometimes court intrigues, sometimes factions, and party animosities, will lead to almost perpetual wars, in which the lives of thousands are sacrificed. For we poor mortals have alone found out that horrid art of fabricating weapons, to destroy our own species, when even furious tigers among themselves, and cruel bears, as the poet says, preserve an everlasting peace<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> Indica tigris agit rabidâ cum tigride pacem  
Perpetuam; sævis inter se convenit urfis.  
At homini ferrum lethale incude nefandâ  
Produxisse parum est, &c. Juv. Sat. xv. v. 163.

Navigation, sea-voyages to distant parts of the globe, for trade's and gain's sake; distant and unwholesome climates, where commerce, troops, and garrisons are kept up, carry likewise numbers off. Professions and manufactures, which are very laborious or pernicious to health, shorten also the lives of thousands; and thus those very institutions in society, by which millions get bread, and families maintain themselves, serve, exclusively of luxury and numberless wars, to thin the human race, or at least to send a great part of it sooner out of the world than nature intended. There is scarcely a doubt but that England, on account of its natural produce, its fertility, its fisheries, might be half as populous again as it is at present, if wars, navigation, commerce, manufactures, luxury, and want of encouragement of the married state, did not prevent it. Some hundred thousands of sea-faring people, are supposed to be kept from marrying, and perhaps as many more, particularly among the middling class of people, because the dearth of living, the increased wants in house-keeping, too much arising from luxury and folly, the education bestowed on both sexes, particularly the female, which in England is very little calculated for œconomy and domestic



tic happiness, render the entering into the marriage state, extremely difficult and hazardous. If, comparatively speaking, a few get rich by manufactures and commerce, there are thousands, who suffer by them. How many, for instance are obliged in Ireland, notwithstanding all the tillage and breeding of cattle, to be contented, the whole year round, with potatoes and sour milk, hardly tasting any butcher's meat, because Irish butter and salted provisions are to be exported to almost all parts of the world. How many thousands of poor Irish go almost naked, to render their linen and their woollen manufactures flourishing, because the produce of them is to be exported, and the weavers, the labourers, and thousands of others, must, by means of their industry, pay rent to their landlords, tithes to the clergy, and taxes to government. It seems to be no concern of those who take the greatest part of their scanty earnings from them, how these poor people live, and how they support a wretched life. Nobody, therefore, who knows the rights of mankind, would blame them, if they, being a hundred times more numerous than their task-masters, obliged them to live upon a greater equality with themselves, and either be contented likewise with sour milk and

potatoes ; or divide, what are called the good things of this world, with more impartiality. Indeed, whoever views mankind in the state of society we live in, with an eye not blinded by prejudices, and with sentiments of philanthropy, whoever examines those refinements, which are so much extolled as the means of promoting the prosperity of the human race, and the happiness of nations, can hardly prevent the rising of some melancholy reflections within his mind, attended by a wish for a reformation of those notions which are adopted as the leading principles of a system, supposed to be best calculated for extending and increasing the comforts of life, and the benefits of society. Being myself accustomed by education to our present mode of living, I am far from declaiming against its real advantages, and far from being inclined to renounce habits which are become second nature ; but, on examining things as they are, with more attention, I am notwithstanding of opinion, that the farther we remove from our original state, the more we lose sight of true happiness. Him, who thinks that I speak too warmly, and with too much enthusiasm, for blending sparingly the refinements of a too highly cultivated state of society with that of simple nature, I shall only ask,

ask, How, according to Tacitus, the ancient Britons and Germans lived? Of the Fennians, one of the old German nations, he says<sup>7</sup>: “ They live upon herbs, their clothes are skins, their bed the earth.—The chase supports both men and women. The latter attend on such occasions the former, and partake of the prey. The shelter even of their babes, against storms and wild beasts, is but an harbour, constructed of branches of trees twined together. Hither they resort when young, and this is their receptacle in old age. This mode of life they think to be happier, than fighting under the burden of tilling the ground; than the laborious erection of houses; than being agitated by fear in defending their own, or by hope of seizing that which belongs to others. Thus secure against men, secure against the gods, they have obtained the most difficult of all things, not even to entertain a wish which they wanted to be gratified.”

I readily own, that being bred in a very different manner from that of our ancestors, it would be impossible for me to live in the manner which is here described, or that I

<sup>7</sup> De Moribus Germanorum, c. 46.

should

should find any comfort in it; but when it is considered, that all those who aspire to honours or riches, whether it be by commerce, manufactures, agriculture, inheritance, or by any other means, do it always in the hope, and with the intention, to obtain at last, if possible, what Tacitus calls the most difficult of all things, it is beyond dispute, that, according to our daily experience, it cannot be obtained by the present mode of living, and that it was only attainable by that in which the Fennians lived. Besides, if length of time, and duration, could decide which state of society was the most conformable to the nature of man, that of the old Germans and Britons, or that of modern refinements, judgment would be given in favour of the former; for, according to common chronology, it has subsisted in Germany and Britain longer than four thousand years, when the other can boast hardly of a thousand years duration. How much more might be said of the happiness of nations, supposed to be derived and increased by commerce and manufactures, both which notwithstanding all that can be argued against them, are, in our present state of society, not only very advantageous, but, considering the situation nations have placed themselves in, very  
 neces-

## MANUFACTURES. 251

necessary and of the utmost consequence. The English, therefore, on perceiving this, have wisely stretched both to the utmost, and have successfully contended for the superiority, in this respect, above all other countries.

L O N.

## L O N D O N.

LONDON, though even in the times of Tacitus<sup>\*</sup>, celebrated for its commerce, was, however, eight hundred years ago, but of a very small circumference, when compared with its present extent. Within this century it has increased to an astonishing degree, and the mad spirit of building, during the twenty years, in which I have resided in this metropolis, has enlarged its extent so much, that a person who has not seen it within this short space of time, would hardly know the environs of London any more. New towns have sprung up on its former borders, in the south, west, and north, where tracts of land, that were, a few years since, fields for cattle to graze in, are now covered with thousands of houses. Fine squares and streets, most of them regularly laid out and well paved, present palaces to the eye, which bespeak riches and grandeur, where a little while ago nothing was to be seen but uncultivated grounds, brick-kilns, and even dung-hills. Perhaps, within twenty years more, if

<sup>\*</sup> TACITUS *Annal.* lib. xiv. c. 33.

government does not set bounds to this rage of enlarging the metropolis, all the villages, which about the middle of this century, were two or three miles distant from London, will be at the end of it joined to this monstrous capital, and make part of it. It has been a matter of dispute, whether Paris or London could boast of the greater extent; and I am certain, that the latter has the advantage, if it can be allowed to be such, and deserves that name. I have surveyed Paris twenty years ago, from the church of Notre Dame, and from the royal observatory, and I thought it then one third smaller than London. About four years ago when I visited the metropolis of France again, I took the opportunity of another view, and was fully confirmed in my former opinion.

Forty years ago, the number of houses in London was estimated at about 125,000, and the number of streets at 6000. I believe the former may, with some degree of probability, now be said to be not less than 150,000, and the other perhaps 6500. As to the number of inhabitants in London, the opinions differ greatly, and it is during the winter season undoubtedly more populous than during the summer months. But supposing, the number  
of

of houses as stated before was nearly right, and every one of them, on an average, was inhabited by five persons only, the sum total would be about 750,000, which I think by no means too much; though Dr. Price endeavours to prove<sup>9</sup>, that in the year 1777, it amounted only to 543,420. I am rather inclined to think, that during the winter, and the beginning of spring, London contains very near 900,000 souls; some pronounce them to be a million. How great an increase is this when compared to former times. It is said that in the year 1631, under Charles I. the inhabitants of London were numbered by an order from the privy-council, and that only 130,178<sup>10</sup> were found. If this be true, and the population of all England at that time, as it might be supposed, was not much inferior to what it is now, how great is then the disproportion between the present metropolis and that about an hundred and fifty years ago! How monstrous does the head appear now, when compared with the body.

<sup>9</sup> Essay on the Population of England, p. 5.

<sup>10</sup> If this statement be true, which, I own, appears to me improbable, it is, perhaps, to be understood of the city by itself, and even then it seems to be under-rated.



The riches which are sunk and gained upon that, comparatively speaking, little spot, which goes under the general denomination of London, is incredible, even when only the building and the rent of houses is calculated. Supposing the erecting of each house, some of which have cost many thousand pounds, is put down for three hundred only, it will produce forty-four millions; and stating the annual rent of each, without exception, at twenty pounds only, three millions will be paid in London annually for house-rent.

The government of the city of London, represents, in miniature, that of the kingdom, and that of the united American provinces is a still greater likeness. The lord-mayor may be looked upon as the king of the city, the aldermen bear a faint resemblance to the house of lords, and the common council, as deputies of the different wards, to the house of commons. A lord-mayor is annually elected, and that solemn shew, by which the city is yearly entertained on the lord mayor's day, when he enters his office, though highly satisfactory to the majority of spectators, is a kind of burlesque upon the taste of the citizens; but it was more so formerly than now, since of late some alterations have taken place in conduct-  
ing

ing this solemnity, though there is great room for much more reformation <sup>1</sup>.

The city of London is divided not only into twenty-six wards, but into eighty-nine companies also, each of which has its hall. Twelve of them are the most respected, and the Lord-mayor is generally a member of one of these. Those who are called liverymen of companies, only have the right to chuse the representatives for the city in parliament; and whoever is not a freeman of the city and does not belong to them, is excluded from voting. Hence it appears, that numbers of the most opulent inhabitants of London, many merchants, bankers, and others who live upon their fortunes, are not qualified to chuse their representatives in parliament, because they do not belong to any of those companies.

Though the English in general, and the inhabitants of London in particular, are much against soldiery; yet the city maintains a kind of militia of its own, which is called the trained bands. If they were complete, they would consist of 6000 men, besides an artil-

<sup>1</sup> In the German original a more ample account is given of the internal government of the city; but as this is well known in this country, it is here omitted.

lery company of 500. They are of little consequence, and though it is said that London could raise within four and twenty hours, not less than 40,000 men, yet I believe that 10,000 regular troops could disperse them on the first onset.

As Westminster is a separate and independent city from that of London, it has likewise a distinct government. Instead of a lord-mayor it has a high-steward, who is appointed for life by the dean and chapter of Westminster-abbey. He is generally a nobleman, and has a deputy-steward under him. The chapter nominates a high-bailiff also, who is confirmed by the high-steward. Westminster sends two representatives to parliament, and every house-keeper has a right to vote. I have seen several parliamentary elections in England, but none that, in regard to the most scandalous rioting, exceeded those of Westminster.

There is no place in the world, where a man may live more according to his own mind, or even his whims, than in London. For this reason, I believe, that in no place are to be found a greater variety of original characters, which are the offspring of such freedom. Every one may choose his company according to his liking, and never trouble himself about

his next neighbour, whom he oftentimes does not know even by name. A foreigner will at first hardly be pleased with the manner of living in London, because it is so different from what he has experienced on the continent; but if he has sense enough, to perceive and to value that freedom in thinking and acting, which is to be enjoyed in England, he will soon adopt the sentiments of Erasmus\*, without thinking of the *suavia*, which he seemed to be so fond of, and wish to conclude his days in England. One thing, however, I shall mention, that poverty is no where harder to be endured than in this country; and, perhaps, the consequences of getting into debt are no where more to be dreaded than here. If England were not so enormously burdened with taxes, no land, to live in, could be preferred to this, and no place would be more desirable than London. The friend of arts and sciences, the friend of religious liberty, the philosopher, the man who wishes to be secure against political and ecclesiastical

\* Erasmi Epist. lib. v. epist. 10. Nymphae divinis vultibus, blandæ, faciles.—Suavia, quæ si tu, Fauste, semel gustasses, quam sint mollicula, quam fragrantia, profecto cuperes non decennium solum, ut Solon fecit, sed ad mortem usque in Anglia peregrinari.

-tyrants,

tyrants, the man of business, the man of pleasure, can no where be better off than in this metropolis. A man of learning, who can live without great cares, may gratify here his favourite inclinations, for libraries, for new publications, for learned acquaintance. I have known many a one here, who, as a philosopher, lived happy, and according to Horace :

*Ambitione procul, . . . . .*

*. . . . . paucorum hominum est mentis bene sanæ.*

Epicureans, who regard sensual pleasures as the chief end of life, naturally resort to London ; and the man of business, who thinks it the greatest happiness to be accumulating money, may here, sooner than any where, either acquire riches or become a bankrupt.

It is a prejudice to think that London is an unhealthy place. No wonder that a great many die, when there is so vast a number of inhabitants. I have found, that people of a good constitution, who lead a regular life, may attain to a great age here as well as in other towns ; and I have observed, that those who live in the country are subject to as many illnesses, and die as soon, as those in town. There are undoubtedly instances, in which the exchange of country air for that in London,

may be conducive to health, or its recovery ; but I have likewise reason to think, that many who exclaim against the air of London do it from affectation. There are parts of London, and particularly of Westminster, which are almost as quiet as the country, and where, in regard to disturbances and sleep, no such complaints can be made as Boileau brought against Paris :

Qui frappe l'air bon Dieu ! de ces lugubres cris ?  
Est ce donc pour veiller, qu'on se couche à Paris ?

Sat. vi.

Nor are those subterraneous dangers to be dreaded at London, which are concealed at Paris under the very ground upon which many of its streets, and many of its churches, are erected. The quarries underneath that capital, which more than once, by the falling in of their surfaces, have excited horror and exhibited melancholy scenes, present, as Mr. Mercier expresses it, steeples and high-vaulted churches, like so many signs, to tell the eye, that as much as they see of them in the air, so much they want below at their foundation<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Mercier, *Tableau de Paris*, tome i. p. 20. Amsterdam, 1783.

The arguments which are derived from the bills of mortality, to prove the unhealthiness of London, will be found very unsatisfactory by him who knows how little dependance is to be placed upon them. They are made with so little exactness, that no conclusive inferences can be drawn from them, in regard to the state of the air, and the salubrity of London, by comparing the annual number of christenings and burials. The latter will always exceed the former, for the following reasons: Quakers and Jews do not have their children baptized; most of the Dissenters, Presbyterians, Lutherans, Calvinists, Roman Catholics, &c. have them baptized by their own clergy. All these are not included among the christenings, although many of them contribute to fill up the burials<sup>4</sup>. It may be farther observed, that most of the servants in London, particularly females, come out of the country, and consequently are not to be found among the christenings, though generally among the burials. Many of those who die in hospitals are not among the christenings, though they are in-

<sup>4</sup> This was written before the tax on the registering of the christenings and burials was laid on; and since that time the bills of mortality may, perhaps, have become more exact.

tered in episcopal church-yards. If these circumstances, relative to the bills of mortality, are considered, the wonder will cease, how it happens, that the number of burials always exceeds that of christenings; and whoever knows the manner in which these bills are composed, will be cautious what inferences he draws from them, in regard to the state of mortality of inhabitants of London.

Great improvements have taken place in London, within these twenty years, and most of them ought to be considered as conducive to the health of its inhabitants. I only wonder that the good understanding of the English, and an age so fertile in improvements, has not yet seriously thought of putting a stop to that absurd and noxious custom of burying the dead among the living, in church-yards amidst dwelling houses, and even in churches under the feet of the parishioners. The late king of Prussia made the best regulations in this respect; and I wonder that the wise example which he has given, has not been more generally adopted.

If all London were built like its western parts, particularly that which is called Marybone, it would be one of the finest cities in Europe. It exceeds Paris by far in regard to  
pave-



pavement and cleanliness, and at night, is infinitely better lighted. A foot-passenger is in continual danger at Paris, but not in London. The lamps to lighten the streets of the French metropolis are hung up in the midst of them, on lines drawn across from one house to the other, like bird-cages; and when the almanack announces moon-light, they are during a fortnight extinguished, let it be ever so dark. Hardly a night passes there without murder being committed; but, in London, the great command, *Thou shalt not commit murder*, seems to be much more regarded.

A thousand hackney-coaches ply day and night in the streets, Sundays excepted, when their number is lessened. In the city the noise and bustle is greater than in the western part of the town; and it is said, that the manners in the neighbourhood of St. James's are more refined than about the Royal Exchange. The nearer I come to the mansion-house, the more I am put in mind of the picture which is drawn of Rome by Juvenal:

. . . . . *Nobis properantibus obstat*

*Unda prior; magno populus premit agmine lumbos*

*Qui sequitur: ferit hic cubito, ferit aslere duro*

*Alter; et hic tignum capiti incutit, ille metretam.*

Sat. iiii. v. 243.

More people are seen in the streets of London at midnight than in many considerable towns of Europe at noon-day. In the time of James the First, the houses were almost entirely built of wood, but at present they are of brick; and though their outside appearance, particularly in the city, is, on account of the smook, sometimes as black as the tents of Kedar, yet the inside of those which are inhabited by reputable people, is clean and neat, and oftentimes costly. It must be said, in praise of the modern English, that they are much addicted to cleanliness; and that, particularly in regard to the neatness of their linen, they leave other nations much behind them. In Erasmus's time, indeed, they must have been but very little acquainted with the virtue of cleanliness. Their habitations must then have borne rather the resemblance of hog-styes than of the dwellings of men. No wonder, therefore, that Erasmus was of opinion, that uncleanness was one of the causes which occasioned the plague to break out so frequently in London. His description of the filthiness, to be observed in houses, would hardly be credited in our days "The floors in them, he says, are covered  
" with clay and bull-rushes, which now and  
" then are renewed in such a manner, that  
" the

“ the old bottom remains for twenty years together. Under it are concealed spittings and spewings, the urine of dogs and men, remnants of beer thrown away, fish-bones, and other kinds of filth, which I forbear to mention<sup>5</sup>.” At present foreigners, introduced into the houses of the better class of people, are struck with the neatness and elegance of the furniture, and are almost afraid to tread upon those fine carpets, which now cover the floor, instead of the bull-rushes with which they were anciently decorated.

The number of inhabitants in London being so great, it may be easily supposed, that their manner of living must be different, according to their situation in life, their education, and their circumstances. It has been observed in all societies, where different ranks are to be met with, that those who are of a lower order, want to imitate those of a higher, and to adopt as much as is in their power, their dress and air; this is also very visible in London. To guess at the rank in life of those who appear in the streets, or in public places, is a difficult matter. The rich man dresses frequently as if he had but a small income; and he, whose

<sup>5</sup> Erasmi. Op. tom. iii. Epist. 432. col. 1815. Edit. Lugd. Batav. 1703.

circumstances are very narrow, is desirous of being supposed to be in affluence. On comparing the manner of living in England, and particularly in London, which differs greatly from that in great towns of other countries, it will be found, that the English, particularly those of the middling class, live more frugally than those who are of the same rank in other countries. Nevertheless, house-keeping, let it be ever so economically conducted, will be expensive.

The causes of the dearth of all the necessities of life, particularly of provisions, in London, are various. I will mention only a few. The traffic in provisions is considered as one method of acquiring fortunes, and of amassing riches, which alone, cannot but produce bad consequences for the community. This trade is no where carried on with more refinement, nor stretched farther than in England, especially in the metropolis. Many good laws have been made to regulate this trade, and bring it to a standard of equity and justice; but the case is the same in this respect, as in that of a hundred other good laws, which, after being made, are not sufficiently enforced, and consequently soon neglected. People who live by what they earn with the  
work

work of their hands, suffer most by this dear-  
ness of provisions; for though it is said that  
the price of day-labour is four or five times  
higher than it was about the year 1514; yet,  
it ought to be considered, that corn at present  
is five, and butchers' meat fifteen times  
dearer than it was then; and consequently,  
that labour, in proportion, is cheaper; and  
a day-labourer poorer, than in the year which  
is mentioned.

All sorts of provisions are not only burdened  
with the heaviest taxes, but every one, through  
whose hands they pass, receives considerable  
profits, which the consumer at last is to pay.  
When government lays a small tax upon a  
commodity which is much in use, those who  
sell it wholesale or retail will not seldom take  
the advantage immediately, and under pre-  
tence of an increased tax, reimburse themselves  
perhaps ten-fold. Thus, when some years ago,  
one single penny was laid on each bottle of  
port wine, as an additional duty, the retailers  
of wine took the opportunity immediately of  
raising it to six pence, which hitherto has been  
paid in every tavern and every coffee-house,  
though the duties on this sort of wine have  
since been lowered. Yet none of the fre-  
quenters of coffee-houses and taverns ever

complain, or try to bring it to the old standard again, because they all wish to go under the denomination of gentlemen ; and it seems, at least in London, the prevailing notion, that it is ungentleman-like to take notice, or to complain of any imposition in such places, and that a true gentleman must pay whatever is demanded, without murmuring, let it be ever so extravagant.

In those provinces of England, where provisions may be bought, without their going through many hands before they come to the last consumer, living is much cheaper than in or near London. Within the distance of sixty miles, the best provisions are brought to this devouring metropolis, because here they fetch the best price. They who live in or near those villages which furnish London with garden-stuff, can very seldom buy it so good as it is to be had in Covent Garden, or other London markets. The people in Gloucestershire, when they wish to have good cheese, the produce of their county, are sometimes under a necessity of sending for it to London. The necessaries of life, and the supply of the wants of luxury, which are daily carried to this enormous metropolis, are beyond conception, and the annual

—con-

consumption of them might even stagger the belief of credulity.

It is very natural, that if luxury increases, particularly in London, dearness of living must do the same. Fifty years ago a family might live very handsomely on five hundred pounds *per annum*, but a thousand will at present hardly go so far. Yet, though the price of every thing is advanced, more necessaries of life, as well as luxuries, are at present required in London than fifty years ago. To prove this, I could produce a number of arguments, but two may be sufficient. The first relates to the article of sea-coals, the other to coaches. The former are not only much dearer than they were fifty years ago, but the consumption of them is more than doubled also. Coaches have increased at an enormous rate. The coach-making trade, an hundred years ago, was hardly known in England, and at present it is one of the most lucrative that is carried on. In the time of James I. a tax upon coaches would, perhaps, have produced not a hundred pounds, and at present it is worth to government, annually, more than a hundred thousand. I cannot, however, help observing, that luxury has, within these few years made such great strides and so rapid a progress,

gress, that it seems as if it were hastening to its summit; from whence, after being arrived there, its motion must, according to the nature of all human things, be retrograde, for it cannot go on *ad infinitum*, and to stand still, in its full strength and vigour, for a long while, is hardly possible, since its nerves must grow weaker. As for the minister of finances, the increase of luxury, among all classes of people, must be beneficial to him; he must grow richer because the taxes will be the more productive, whilst those who indulge themselves with a more luxurious life, will grow poorer. Whoever lives upon a thousand a year, is supposed to pay at present about six hundred of it in government duties, taxes, excise, church, parish and poor-rates.

Great, however, as this dearness is, it seems to be a wonder that it does not rise higher. Considering only the article of beer, and the very great duties, to which the process of brewing is subject, it is rather surprising that the price is not higher. If it be considered, how great the imposts are upon the land which produces the corn; the expences of tillage, and the profits of the farmer; the heavy taxes upon malt and hops; the very considerable profits which are taken by the brewers,  
who



who frequently acquire great fortunes; the profits of the alehouse-keepers, and the productive imposts laid on the beer itself by government; it is hardly to be wondered at, that a pot of porter costs three-pence half-penny. It has been calculated, that an acre of land, which is let at thirty shillings, if it is sowed with barley, produces to government by the manifold taxes, until the beer reaches the last consumer, not less than eight pounds sterling annually.

Having mentioned before, that all articles of provision when they come into the London market, have already passed through many hands, which have taxed them very heavily, I will explain this in two instances only. The first shall be taken from the butcher's meat, and the other from the fish-market. There is a kind of leeches called graziers, who buy as much cattle of the farmers as they can get. These they keep in fields, meadows, and stables so long, till the carcase-butchers, a kind of beings, we, on the continent, are entirely unacquainted with, come from London to buy it off their hands. These butchers of quality, if I may so style them, have their slaughter-houses in and near London, whence the common butchers, who keep stalls in the markets, fetch  
the

the meat to sell it to the consumer. No wonder that, by so much forestalling, the price is advanced, when farmers, graziers, carcase-butchers, and retail butchers, get rich at the expence of the last buyer. And to keep up the price, I have been told, that it is no uncommon thing with some butchers, rather to bury the meat, which they cannot dispose of, under ground, than to sell it under that price which they have fixed upon. There are, indeed, good laws to forbid forestalling and such iniquitous transactions; but they are, as I have already observed of other English laws, too much neglected, and easily evaded, being executed with very little rigour. These, however, are the natural consequences of too luxurious a state of society, and of the avarice of trade, by which means the feelings of humanity towards the indigent are suppressed. In the cheaper provinces of Germany and France, the prices of provisions are, at present, almost the same as they were about four hundred years ago in England<sup>6</sup>, but which now, at least in London, bread perhaps excepted, are six or seven times higher. What I have said of the flesh-market, is likewise applicable to that of fish. London might be abundantly supplied

<sup>6</sup> RAPIN, vol. i. p. 339, note 4.

with

with almost all kinds of sea-fish, and by that means the price of butcher's meat be lowered ; but here again tricks are played in abundance, and forestallers are in plenty. The consumers of fish in London, I believe, pay not much less than an hundred *per cent.* on the original cost. Besides, the English do not pay a proper attention to the fisheries on their coasts, which, if they did, they would find extremely advantageous. I have been informed, that many an English fishing-boat, which goes to sea to provide for the London market, is glad to meet a Dutch one, which by its industry has obtained a good cargo. The Englishman readily buys it, pays a good price to the Dutchman, brings the fish to London, and sells it for double the money which it cost him. The common people in London, I have observed, are not overfond of fish ; for they prefer flesh, as to them the most agreeable food. A foreigner, when he first comes to England, will be surpris'd to see what flesh-eaters the English are. He will be struck with the sight of an enormous piece of beef, such, perhaps, as he never saw in his life, placed before him upon the table ; and being used, in his own country, to a great deal of vegetables, he will be at a loss what to make of a small plate, with a few

VOL. I. T green

green leaves, as the companion to the beef, bearing a proportion of one to fifty. The common people in London are likewise more dainty than those in other places. A labourer will have his daily beef or mutton, his white bread, and his strong beer. I remember that within my time, the parliament ordered a kind of bread to be baked of flour of wheat mixed with that of rye, to sell it cheaper; but none even of the poorer class will eat it, though it is very palatable, and keeps longer moist than the common white bread. It is brown, and that seems to be a sufficient reason to reject it. Most of the English are much prejudiced in respect to the colour of what they eat and drink; they please the eye oftentimes at the expence of the palate and of the taste. The whiter the bread is, the better they think it to be; and some bakers, who take the advantage of this fancy, mix the flour, in the most unwarrantable manner, with alum. There are heavy penalties against such abominable practices, but it is said to be done notwithstanding. The English like also their vegetables on the table as green as when gathered, and therefore seldom boil them sufficiently, either in mere water, or salt and water, for fear they should lose their colour; though they would be more palat-

palatable, and more wholesome, if they dressed them as we do. A foreigner will wonder at the whiteness of their veal, which is likewise produced by art, for the calves are frequently bled, and chalk is laid before them to lick at, with no other view than to make the flesh whiter, though it becomes, by these means, more dry. We foreigners think otherwise in these things; we do not indulge our eyes, when our tongue and our taste enter a protest against their gratification. The same prejudice prevails among the English in regard to some liquors. They would not think the best French brandy to be good, if it were not deeply coloured; nor would they much care for their red port, if the juice of the grape were not tinged by art.

As I am speaking of the provisions in London, I will here make a few remarks on a French writer<sup>7</sup>, who gave, but a few years ago, an account of London. He says, there are but three kinds of red wine in London, and the white are all factitious. As to the first, there are many more sorts than three, and as to the second assertion, it is untrue. Among the red, that of port is the most common. They say, that this kind of wine is best

<sup>7</sup> Grosley, Londres, tom. i. p. 143. Yuv.

adapted to promote the digestion of English food, though I am sure, that among hundreds hardly two can afford to drink wine, and the rest, who do without it, digest as well as those who indulge themselves with a bottle. The wines which are to be had in taverns and coffee-houses, are, few houses excepted, very indifferent; nay in many, at least before the wine was subject to the excise, were entirely English productions, or liquors made in England, and sold as foreign wine. The very indifferent taste of numbers of wine-drinkers, even of many who, think themselves connoisseurs in these things, is very beneficial to retailers of wine. Many will drink any thing for port-wine that is red, and will praise it the more it is mixed with brandy to make it fiery. I have been told, though I do not vouch the fact, that some students in one of the English universities, many of whom think themselves as good connoisseurs of red-port as ever Horace could fancy himself of his Falernian, were sorry that a tavern-keeper, whom they attended more than their public lectures, would leave off business, because he could live with ease on the fortune he had acquired by it, and towards which the students had greatly contributed. To alleviate their  
for-

forrow, on account of his quitting the tavern, he told them, that he had left the recipe of making the port-wine, which they were so fond of, with his successor, and that they might be sure of losing nothing in regard to the quality of their favourite wine. The ingredients of such home-brewed wines are not always the best, and frequently very prejudicial to health. There is, however, reason to think, that this shameful business, of imposing such factitious liquors for real wines, is much checked by that recent act, which has put the selling of wine under the regulations of the excise. As to white wines I am convinced that, formerly at least, great quantities were made in England. Our Rhenish wines, on account of the heavy duties, which they pay on entering British ports are excessively dear. Nevertheless it may sometimes be read, even over the doors of little ale-houses about London, that there is to be had "Old Hock neat as imported." Our good old Hochheimer is there degraded to perhaps the lowest sort of raisin-wine, if even that is actually to be had. By the bye I will only mention, that the English substitute Hock for Hochheim, pronouncing and even writing Hock for *Hoch*, and leaving the syllable *heim* entirely out.

Madeira wine of the best quality may be had in London, but in many taverns, coffee-houses, and wine-vaults, it is far from being genuine. The French author, whom I have before mentioned, is consequently much in the right when he complains that the wines in England are subject to be adulterated, which, however, is not peculiar to this country. Ancient Rome had not alone a Tucca, whom Martial addresses in a passion :

*Scelus est jugulare Falernum ;*

they will spring up in all countries where wine is drank.

What our French author says of the meat in England, that it has neither the firmness, nor the juice and delicacy of that in France, he is, in my opinion, not wholly right, though he is not altogether in the wrong. As for beef, nothing can excel that of England ; but a foreigner, before he is used to English cookery, will not like it, because it is seldom done enough for the taste of one who has been brought up on the continent. In many countries the calves are killed too early, in England too late. Their mutton is excessively fat, and has, therefore, sometimes a taste which borders on rankness. The London epicureans  
know



know this very well, and prefer, therefore, the Welsh mutton, if they can get it. The English are very partial to their mutton, and seem to be so well convinced of the wholesomeness of this food, that, if any body is not well, they advise him immediately to sweat and to eat mutton-broth; like Doctor Sangrado in *Gil Blas*, who, in all kind of illnesses, recommended warm water and bleeding. The poultry in England is very good, but I cannot say the same of their venison; though they think it one of the highest delicacies, particularly if it is excessively fat. Our venison on the continent, being thoroughly wild, is of a much finer flavour than the English, which greatly resembles their mutton; and indeed their deer feed as tame in their parks as their sheep. A good haunch of mutton has, therefore, sometimes been imposed upon even pretended connoisseurs for a haunch of venison.

Of English vegetables our French author says: "They are impregnated with the smoke of sea-coals, which, particularly about London, fills the whole atmosphere, and they communicate this disagreeable taste to the meat they are boiled with." As to the last assertion, I believe few English,

the very common people perhaps excepted, will put vegetables on their table which are boiled with the meat; and as to the first, I believe it will be denied by every body. The vegetables that grow about Fulham and Battersea, or in other fields and gardens, in the neighbourhood of London, are very good, except that it may be said they are too much forced, by the ground being made too rich. Cauliflowers are no where better than in the London markets, and the English cabbages and turnips are very good. The gardeners, who send their produce to the markets, know very well how to choose the grounds for the different vegetables, and to manure them so as to render them as profitable as possible. Some gardens or fields which lie too low, and too near the Thames, do not, indeed, produce greens so palatable as those on higher ground, because they taste watery, though not smoky. But this is the case with vegetables in other countries, as well as in England. Horace, who tells us that he himself went into the market to buy greens and to enquire, *quanti olus ac far*? knew this perfectly well, for he says:

Caule suburbano, qui siccis crevit in agris  
Dulcior; irriguo nihil est elutius horto.

SAT. 4. lib. ii. v. 15.

The

The misfortune with regard to English vegetables is, as I observed before, that they are often boiled in mere water, and seldom enough. The art of cooking is in general not much advanced in England, and that of dressing vegetables the least of all<sup>3</sup>. I have heard Englishmen, who had mended their taste in foreign countries, say in jest, that heaven had given them good things for the kitchen, but that the devil had sent the cooks.

After this rather long digression, I shall return to the causes of that great dearth of provisions which prevails in London. The luxury of the rich is one of them. A rich duke in England, who keeps no soldiers, neither for ostentation, nor hire, nor for the oppression of his subjects, as our petty princes in Germany do, knows hardly how to spend his income; a lord who wishes to disperse his money among the people, and to contract debts, according to custom; a nabob, who has

<sup>3</sup> In the former part of the reign of Henry VIII. there did not grow in England cabbage, carrot, turnip, or other edible root; and it has been noted, that even queen Catharine herself could not command a salad for dinner, till the king brought over a gardener from the Netherlands. KAMES's Sketches, Sk. v. sect. 1. HUMPHREY's Hist. of Engl. vol. iv. p. 273.

shared in the plundering of the poor Indians; besides many others, who have more money than wit; all these will pay any price for things from which they expect the gratification of their palate, and of their sensuality. For this reason every thing, within forty miles and upwards, is carried to the metropolis, and sold there for prices which would no where else be given. I will not say that luxury in England has been carried to such a height as that of the Romans during their triumvirates, or the times of some Roman emperors of the three first centuries, or that it equals the ridiculous and shameful sensuality of a few German princes, who, not many years ago, had the pastry for their tables sent them from Paris, by extraordinary and very expensive messengers: but, since it is said to be a fact, that some English lords and nabobs have ordered their cooks to put in one day, at noon, every quarter of an hour, a chicken, or venison to the spit before the fire, that they might, if they should come home at an uncertain hour, always find something roasted to Apician nicety; it bears a strong resemblance, and appears to be a faithful imitation of that extravagant luxury of Mark Antony and Cleopatra, which, according to Plutarch, excited so much

much the astonishment in the physician Philotas. The number of idle servants which are kept by people of quality, and who do as much as they can to live somewhat like their masters, is another cause of the dearness of provisions. They too frequently act in earnest the play of High Life below Stairs, for which the master is to defray the expences. The number of horses which are kept in London, and in the country, increase likewise the dearness of provisions. It is very justly said that England is a hell for horses; but, in general, they are, no where better fed and more taken care of, though they afterwards must work hard and run fast. Whoever can, keeps a horse; and the clerks, as well as those who serve behind the counter during the week-days, will at least on Sundays show themselves as gentlemen on the road on horseback. It may easily be supposed, that such a number of horses must require a great deal of corn, and many people to attend them. Besides, how great a number of gentlemen's carriages, hackney coaches, and post-chaises, with a proportionable number of servants are kept, most of which have a relation to luxury, though it cannot be said of all!

The

The raising of the price of land and its ground-rent, cannot but raise, at the same time, its produce. Agriculture is carried on to a high degree, with a view of making it a source of riches. The owners of landed property endeavour, as much as they can, to farm it out at very high prices; and yet most of the farmers find ways and means to enrich themselves. The worst is, that the great and rich among them generally do whatever they can to enlarge their farms, by the expulsion of the smaller ones. By these means, they too often can form combinations, to fix the price of many sorts of provisions as they think proper. Little farmers and cottagers bring their produce, and the savings of their provisions, to market, or sell them, when they have an opportunity for it, at a moderate price, because they want money; but this not being always the case with the rich farmers, who expel the poorer ones, and get possession of their grounds, they may keep the necessaries, as well as some of the luxuries of life back, till they bear a price that suits their avarice.

I have reason to think, that the riches imported from the East Indies have also greatly contributed to raise the price of provisions and

of landed estates. There are many ways in England to attempt the acquisition of a fortune. Success in trade is perhaps one of the most honest, if no improper means are employed. To get contracts from government to provide for the army, or navy, has enriched many; and he who has friends to recommend and to support him, whatever his character in other respects may be, succeeds generally in his application for them; but a worthy man, who has only his honesty to recommend him, seldom obtains a lucrative contract. It is likewise possible, that a person who keeps a bagnio may acquire an ample fortune, and buy estates, to make his posterity rise in the world after him; it is possible, that a waiter in one of those houses, where old and young men of quality and fashion sometimes lose a thousand guineas, or more, in one evening, may steal, within a few years, a fortune together: but, within these many years, no way has been surer to acquire riches than to try the climate of the East Indies, and after getting, by fair and unfair means, plenty of money, to return to England and to live in affluence, sacrificing to all kinds of luxury and ostentation. These people having acquired with so much ease immense riches, wetted, perhaps, with the tears  
of

of a thousand poor Indians, do not care how much they pay for an estate ; and, therefore, will give prices which are out of all proportion with the real value of things, as generally prevalent in Europe. They regard the rules of œconomy as little as that Roman spendthrift Lucullus, who thought it a trifle to pay fifty thousand pounds for a statue of Apollo, which he intended to place in the Capitol.

The inclosing of commons is considered by some as a cause of the increasing dearth of provisions. Much has been advanced on both sides, relative to the inquiry, whether such inclosures are beneficial or not ? but I think that this question ought to be answered differently, according to the light in which it is viewed. To till uncultivated ground, and make it productive, is certainly a commendable and useful undertaking, and must render provisions more plentiful and consequently cheaper ; but, if the poor who lived on such a common, and, kept, perhaps, a cow, a few sheep, or some poultry, to procure a livelihood, and to sell something of their little produce, are driven from thence by the rich men, who obtained a grant to inclose it, without being provided for elsewhere, nobody can deny that this is the  
greatest



greatest injustice. I have heard of frequent complaints being made, that by the inclosing of commons, the interest and convenience of the rich have been much more consulted than the feelings of compassion towards the poor. Some opulent people, who reside in the country, will sometimes buy cottages near their mansions, for no other purpose than to shut them up, and to let them decay, because they do not like to have the poor for their neighbours. They allege, that they are addicted to stealing, and therefore ought to be kept at a distance : but this way of reasoning has no foundation either in truth or humanity. If opportunities and encouragement were given to the indigent to earn bread, and if care were taken to initiate their children early and properly in morality as well as industry, they never would apply themselves to stealing, nor even think it strange, that, since the Creator designed the earth for the dwelling and the subsistence of all men, a few should engross so much, whilst thousands have nothing.

The number of women known to be of easy virtue, with which London is filled, contributes, in some respects, towards the expensiveness of living. I have before mentioned, that  
hun-

hundreds, perhaps thousands of houses, in this large town, are occupied by women who live by prostitution. Old dotards, who, as it might be supposed, are possessed of more money than wit; young men, who, in expectation that their fathers, or some rich relations will soon die, borrow money of a Jewish usurer, at the rate of ten and more *per cent.* keep their bewitching dulcineas in all sorts of extravagance, for their own amusement as they think, but frequently, unknown to them, for the entertainment of others also. This, perhaps, is carried so far, that married men, without acquainting their wives and children with it, are at the expence of double housekeeping, of which that of the mistress is generally the most expensive; for it is needless to prove, that these kind of creatures are not much addicted to frugality, prudence, or moderation. The host of these mercenaries of the Cyprian goddess have been reckoned to be in London stronger than forty thousand. Many of them follow their profession from inclination; others, who have been first debauched, and afterwards abandoned by unprincipled men, do it from want and indigence. There are instances that some of them, who were kept in affluence, and all possible indulgence by their votaries, have  
reduced

reduced them at last, probably not from a principle of gratitude, to the utmost distress, nay sometimes to an ignominious exit. Grosley<sup>10</sup>, without proper inquiry into the truth of the assertion, has copied what the Abbé le Blanc, in his letters on the English and French nations<sup>1</sup>, has said, that many daughters of clergymen, even of the dignitaries of the church, are among this class of unfortunate females. There are undoubtedly instances of this; but they do by no means occur so often as is stated by the Abbé, who frequently writes in a very superficial manner; and when such cases do happen, even then, in all probability, the contributions of this sort are greater on the side of the clergy of the established church than on that of the dissenters, because the first are not only more numerous, but the education, which many of them give their children, is not so strict and exemplary as that which the generality of the dissenting clergy bestow upon theirs.

The reasons why the number of women, who plunge into this irregular course of life, is so great, are various, and many of them very visible. Corruption of morals and lux-

<sup>10</sup> Londres, tome ii. p. 128.

<sup>1</sup> Vol. ii. Lett. lviii. p. 67. *English Translation.*

ury, which are beyond imagination in so great a metropolis, become very dangerous to youth of both sexes; they produce seducers, and such as wish to be seduced, in abundance. All great cities, and particularly London, may be considered as a sort of hot-beds, where all natural instincts, and all vices, which from an abuse of them take their origin, vegetate very powerfully, and arrive at maturity quicker than in common soils. Montaigne<sup>2</sup>, that strict and careful observer of himself and others, was astonished at a conversation of some young ladies, which unobserved he had over-heard; but, what would he have said, if he could have listened to the private conversations of numbers of the hopeful youth of both sexes in London! The education given to young females, is, as I have before observed, generally some degrees above their respective rank. To gratify afterwards their inclination for vanity, for dress, and for sensual pleasures, chastity is too often made a sacrifice. In that state of society in which we live, every thing almost may be done with money, and all that is desirable may be bought for it; health, tranquillity of mind, and immortality excepted. The fable of Jupiter

<sup>2</sup> *Essais*, liv. iii. chap. 5. vol. iii. p. 125.

and

and Danae is every day, in this great city, turned into history and real fact. Men of rank, or riches, or such as are possessed of neither, but live without morality and good principles, become the seducers of those who are too ready to be seduced; and when their paramours have gratified their lust, they leave those whom they have made miserable, and go in quest of other victims, whom they may deprive of their innocence and virtue. Thus the number of those wretched females increases daily, who are seen wandering about in the streets, by dozens and more, not only at night but even at noon day. Many of them are hardly twelve or thirteen years of age, who, by following their unfortunate occupation, soon hasten to an untimely end, and finish their early days generally in extreme distress, in poverty and disease.

It may easily be supposed, from what I have said, that the education of youth in London must be liable to many dangers; and that parents, though they had the eyes of Argus, would not always be able to prevent great mischief and serious misfortunes from happening to their children. In that part of London where the court air is to be breathed, nunneries are established, in which, however, the vow of chastity is unknown. The abbesses and prioresses of these convents

are said to be matrons of great experience ; and, as some call them, diabolical instruments of seduction. They save, as I have been informed, out of the income of their benefices, so much, that they at last give them up, and conclude their days, with much pomp, in a secular life. I do not think, that it redounds much to the honour of English police, not to devise effectual means to lessen at least this growing evil, so detrimental to that morality, which is pronounced to be the support of that society in which we live. How far the indulgence goes, which is shewn in this respect, appears from the uninterrupted publication of the most immoral writings, and the most indecent prints ; which are exposed to public view at the windows of some print-shops, to divert the young and old of both sexes, who pass by. Nay, there is even published annually, and sold publicly, a list of the principal Corinnas, mentioning at the same time their respective habitations, and their personal accomplishments, not forgetting those which are to be met with in private. What blessed effects must this produce upon young minds of both sexes ! and how happy must a country be, where the police, without concern, may leave it to the power of virtue to prevent all the evils of which wisdom might be apprehensive ! I will  
by

by no means enter into a dispute with those who affirm, that since the state of nature and that of society are frequently at open variance, women of easy virtue are not only to be connived at, but even, under some restrictions, to be supported, that the virtue of modest women may be preserved, and be in safety. Supposing all this were granted, should it notwithstanding not be deemed necessary to make this evil, for the sake of morality, less apparent? If luxury were checked, if frugality were substituted for extravagance, if the things of this world were more equally divided than they are, the good effects of it would soon shew themselves. There is no doubt, but that among those unfortunare females, whose prostitution is deemed a safeguard of modest women, some might be found, who would have turned out better wives and tenderer mothers than many who affect the strictest virtue, and wish to appear as if they could undergo the proof of a fiery ordeal. Indeed, much might be found to lessen the guilt of many of these unfortunate beings, if the history of their seduction and fall were known. Oftentimes, when I have met a Mahomedan in the streets of London, I have not been able to refrain from guessing at his thoughts, when he sees so many prostitutes, who are deemed to be

a security for a husband, that his head may not be ornamented, or that his daughter may not become a mother before she is married. When, in the beginning of the Roman republic, the land was equally divided; when young men married early, without being in fear that they were to starve with their wives and children, the violation of the virtue of the Roman women was almost unheard of, and the *sententia diæ Catonis*, which Horace ascribes to him, was, together with his exhortation to young men, very unnecessary. But, when riches, luxury, and expensiveness of living intruded, the value of innocence was lessened, and it being so intimately connected with happiness, this lost ground too, and deserted Rome. The capital of modern England resembles that of ancient Italy; interest there retarded matrimony, and when it took place at last, it was the expected fortune, as Juvenal says, which excited love, and money that tied the connubial knot:

Inde faces ardent, veniunt a dote sagittæ.

It is true, that various means have been devised in London, to check the evil of prostitution, but they answer very imperfectly. The Magdalen-hospital, a very commendable charity, was



was instituted some years since, for the benefit of females who wish to renounce their disorderly life, and reform their morals. But how small is the number of those who can be received, and who really return from vice to virtue, when compared to those who prefer the ways of immorality ! Some, perhaps, are taken up in the street, and sent to Bridewell, where they are kept for a while to hard labour ; but they are hardly missed among the number of those who remain ; and since no provision is made for their support, when liberated out of prison, they return, partly from necessity, partly from inclination, to their former occupation. That London is infested with so many thieves, house-breakers, and highwaymen, and that, almost every six weeks, dozens of youth, who have hardly attained their twentieth year, are condemned to die, is greatly owing to these women of the town, as they are called. Most of such young malefactors gave themselves up to a debauched course of life, they soon got into distress, which instigated them to robbery, and thus repented too late under the gallows, their acquaintance with these mercenary fair ones. Here, indeed, is an ample field for a good police to exert its wisdom in preventing crimes, that the number of those may be lessened

fened who are to be punished for committing them.

Before I conclude these remarks upon London, I will add something relative to English newspapers. A foreigner, who has never seen them, will hardly believe that so many are printed daily. Every morning, at present, no less than ten different papers, and almost as many in the evening, are published in London, on large folio, in small print. It is now even carried so far, that a paper is published on Sunday morning. Besides these, every week, twice, a Gazette is printed by authority, which contains some news published under the sanction of the court, royal proclamations, advertisements of government, and a long list of notices relative to bankrupts. A true Englishman looks upon the accounts given in these Gazettes, which, in some instances, particularly in war-time, are published extraordinary, as infallible truth; and it is astonishing how they sell on such occasions, and how profitable they are to their printer. A foreigner ought not to think that the news, published in so many papers, is much different. They contain, some letters and essays excepted, nearly the same information. A number of advertisements, paid for at a high price, various letters on political

litical and other subjects, innumerable and frequently the most insignificant paragraphs relating to town and country news, much scandal, and many false reports, which the next day are contradicted, fill the long columns of these papers. Some of them are for the court and the minister, others against them ; but, in both kinds of such prints, very severe things and bitter truths, are published by one party against the other. Cart-loads of papers being printed every day in London, besides many which are published in the country<sup>3</sup>, it is no wonder that the revenues of government, which arise merely from newspapers must be very great. Not only the stamps of the papers themselves, but the tax upon the advertisements which are inserted, are very high. Some papers have more than an hundred of them, and render to government, daily, perhaps more than twenty pounds. All puffs which are inserted among the news as paragraphs, to take in the reader inadvertently, are made to pay as advertisements in the stamp-

<sup>3</sup> Supposing that twenty different papers, in London and in other places in England and Scotland six and thirty, are published weekly, the whole amounts to no less than fifty-six. How far luxury promotes the sale of them, the account-books in the Stamp-office, can prove. In the year 1775, 12,680,000, and in 1782, 15,272,519 were stamped.

office ;

office'; and it were to be wished, that all those paragraphs, which are intended for scandal, should pay, for the benefit of morality and finances, the duty of advertisements also.

The liberty of the press is very visible in these public prints. Several times attempts have been made to restrain this liberty, but fortunately they never have succeeded. Such officers as censors of the press, which in Germany are established almost every where, are not to be met with in England, the two universities perhaps excepted. For this very reason, things are said in these public prints against the highest and the lowest, which in other countries would be severely animadverted upon. The letters which are inserted, on various political and other subjects, are of different merit. Some are elegant, and commend themselves by their style, as well as by the bold truths, and the judicious remarks which they contain; others can boast of neither, and convey calumny and false reasoning, whilst they intend to mislead the weak, or to feed the spirit of party. If any body thinks his character injured by these prints, he may find redress in a court of justice, on proving damages. In such instances the printer is the first who is to be indicted, unless he gives up the author; yet I remember that both printer

ter and author have been punished. The editors of the papers, however, know very well, for the most part, how to evade prosecutions, though of late, several of them have been intangled in law suits, and sometimes suffered imprisonment, fine, or even an exhibition in the pillory. Frequently those who are attacked, appear in print only with the initials of their names, or are exposed by nicknames, very well known to the generality of newspaper readers. The greatest part of those who are thus exposed care very little about it, particularly the ministers and their friends, who mind no abuse, when they only remain in possession of the good things, which they enjoy under government. On the continent, if but half so much were said against princes and ministers, as is done almost daily in England, the most bitter resentment, and the severest punishments, would soon crush him who had dared to expose the follies of the great, or to censure their unjust transactions. I commend the English, who, some excepted, are neither so touchy nor so revengeful, and who happily by their constitution are intitled to speak and to censure freely. Since, however, the reading of newspapers is so common, the ministers, with a view to justify or to defend their good and their bad measures, are almost

/ 6

most under a necessity to keep some papers and some writers in pay, who are to fight their battles, and to combat their antagonists, lest they should create them too many enemies, and gain over to their party more converts than they can spare. Hence such prints go under the denominations of ministerial and anti-ministerial papers ; on both sides animosity is carried to a great length, and impartiality is not to be met with : nay, I think an Englishman would soon throw away an impartial paper as an insipid one, because it seldom happens that he is not attached either to one or the other party.

Every newspaper has its proprietors, who have, according to their deposit-money, a share in the profits which they may produce ; if such a public print is successful, these profits are very considerable. Yet, when I recollect how many new ones have started up during the time I have resided in London, it would seem inexplicable how they could support themselves, if the desire, or rather the avidity of Englishmen to read newspapers, was not beyond conception, and bordering almost upon frenzy. They are so addicted to talking politics, that in almost all companies, from the highest to the lowest, this topic is generally the first and the last which serves for conversation.

tion. The newspapers furnish the champions of either party with materials to keep it up, and to shine with intelligence, or political sagacity, either as patriots or as courtiers. Very few of the numerous frequenters of coffee-houses have any influence in politics; but though they cannot sit, or harangue, or vote in parliament, it is a great satisfaction for them to read the speeches in both houses during the session, and judge of the patriotism, the wisdom, and the eloquence of British senators.

An Englishman, being taken up so much with the politics of his own country, very seldom troubles himself about those of foreign countries, unless they are of great importance, and make him apprehensive that the balance of Europe may be altered. It is his favourite opinion, that England regulates this balance; though, perhaps, among a thousand, there are not five who have any just idea of such a balance, or who are in the least acquainted with the comparative strength of the different European states, their different interests, and the relation they bear to each other, and to the whole, collectively taken, in its aggregate power. Hence the want of knowledge of the geography and the state of the continent is oftentimes so very visible in English newspapers.

The

The little relish, therefore, of their readers for foreign affairs, is very beneficial to them, whom they please most when they entertain them, besides the greater political news of the British empire, with little trifling incidents of the day, which have happened in the metropolis and its environs, or in the more distant parts of the country. After short extracts from the French and Dutch Gazettes, when the mails are arrived, they give strings of paragraphs containing either high flown panegyrics for, or bitter invectives against the ministry; criticisms on their transactions, on their sins of commission and omission; anecdotes of romantic lovers; horrid accounts of robberies, murders, fires, and melancholy accidents. Those papers which communicate the earliest and most interesting intelligence out of the scandalous chronicle, be it true or fictitious, are generally thought to be the most entertaining. They, indeed, furnish no news from distant parts, nor do they mention

. . . . quid toto fiat in orbe ;

Quid Seres, quid Thraces agant :

but the description which Juvenal gives immediately after, fits them exactly ; for they contain scandal in abundance,

. . . sc-



. . . . secreta novercæ

Et pueri; quis amet, quis decipiatur adulter.

. . . . Quis viduam prægnantem fecerit et quo  
Menſe.

Juv. Sat. vi. v. 401, ſeq.

A foreigner, who is not acquainted with the genius of Engliſh newspapers, will, when he firſt takes them in hand, be inclined to think, that they are one of the greateſt bleſſings which could be beſtowed on poor mortals. Thoſe who are in want of money, are offered a hundred or a thouſand and more pounds; whoever wants health, may ſoon be reſtored to it, if he will only choſe one of thoſe univerſal medicines, which are daily announced and which cure every kind of malady. He who wiſhes to retain health and vigour beyond his eightieth year, may be furniſhed with the means of doing it, for a few ſhillings. Thoſe who are deſirous of extending their lives beyond the limits of a century, need only uſe thoſe reſtoratives and corroboratives, which are offered at a guinea or half a guinea a bottle. Should a perſon wiſh to obtain a ſnug place and income under the government, he may be provided with it, on offering a moderate ſum of money, and giving aſſurance that he who will procure it, may depend upon honour and ſecrecy. Eccleſiaſtics, not truſting their church preferment

to

to merit, which is likely to be overlooked and to be neglected, need only inspect the papers, where presentations and advowsons are publicly announced for sale to the best bidder. Bachelors and widowers who want wives, and maidens or widows who long for husbands, have only to pay for the insertion of a tender advertisement, signifying their situation, and assigning the place where answers may be directed to, in unequivocal hopes that their proposals will meet in return with kind overtures, to quench their honourable flames. Married people who wish for healthy, handsome, and strong children, have only to read and to accept the persuasive invitations of Dr. Graham, to attend his delightful lectures, daily announced in the papers<sup>5</sup>; and they will be better instructed by them how to satisfy their wishes, than by reading Quillet's Callipædia with the utmost attention from the beginning to the end. Nay, from motives of philanthropy, to prevent scandal and disgrace, and to save the honour and reputation of those who unluckily have committed false steps, good-natured people offer their houses, under promises of inviolable

<sup>5</sup> This was written at the time when these curious advertisements were presented daily to all classes of newspaper readers.

fecrecy, to those young females, who, without being previously married, are on the point of becoming mothers. They are assured, that they shall be accommodated with all requisite conveniencies, and be treated with the utmost tenderness, until they return into public again with honour; and being afterwards well married, it shall not at all be suspected by their loving husbands, that early chastity did not enter into the catalogue of the virtues of their wives. All these good things, and many more, are daily announced in the English newspapers, for the benefit of mankind, and of society! Our gazettes on the continent do not contain any thing similar, though always on the top of them is mentioned, that they are printed for the good of the public, under the sanction, the censure, and with the gracious privileges of magistrates and princes. British newspapers require no such authorities, nor do they lie under any restrictions. A red neat little vignette, they are ornamented with at the stamp-office, serves instead of all authorities or privileges, and which, though the duties are increased from time to time, bears the motto *semper eadem*.

The coffee-houses in London, where these papers may be read, are said to amount to

3000<sup>6</sup>, which, indeed, is an enormous number, particularly, when it is remembered, that in 1657, the people were so prejudiced against them, that the master of the Rainbow coffee-house, one of the first which was established in London, could not prevent his house being indicted for a nuisance. The great propensity of the modern English to politics, and the increasing curiosity, which constitutes part of their character, can only account for the number of coffee-houses and newspapers in latter times; though their usefulness to trade, and in the transaction of public business, have not a little contributed towards it. The English coffee-houses are greatly preferable to those of other nations, and have only the name, the newspapers, and the refreshments, in common with them. Turbulent noise and loud talking are not to be heard, except in those coffee-houses which are frequented by foreigners, or by people who seem to think they cannot transact business without the most disagreeable noise. In general, the coffee-rooms are filled with the persons who read newspapers, four times as large as ours on the continent, and in very small print, with an attention that excites surprise

<sup>6</sup> In Paris are only between six and seven hundred. MERRICIER *Tableau de Paris*, tome i. p. 212.

in a foreigner, who never has been witness to it before. Some read with great rapidity, and soon throw away a paper, which they have taken into their hands; others seem to spell every word, and make those, who wish for dispatch, wait a long while before they have finished. When I first came into England, I used to wonder how some people could read, with so much patience and attention, these long, and, as it appeared to me, very tedious publications; but when I became a little more acquainted with the English constitution, with the politics, the parties in the state, and the manners of the nation, I soon found, that I began to read with an interest that made me forget the length of them. In Germany the clergy, and other people who affect a strict morality, would think it hurtful to their character, if they were to frequent a coffee-house; but the English think more reasonably, and nobody is blamed for frequenting a coffee-house. Some of them take in, by subscription of their customers, new publications of a small size, together with those which are regularly published monthly. This, however, is not so frequent in the coffee-houses of London, as in those of the country, especially in towns which

are frequented at certain seasons, by people who want to be called fashionable.

I would advise a foreigner or stranger, who wishes to get acquainted with this great metropolis, to provide himself, immediately after his arrival, with a map of London, as the best means to survey such a heap of buildings, and to find his way through thousands of streets, which perplex even those who have resided many years together in this extensive town. Almost every printshop will furnish him with such a plan; but he must be careful to ask for one of the newest, since a single year, perhaps, will produce new streets, which are not to be found on a map that is but a few years old. There is no occasion for his carrying it always publicly in his hand, when he goes abroad, as Condamine did, and by that means exposed himself to the laughter, or even insults of the populace. He will do well to peruse it for his purpose before he goes out, and here and there are places little frequented, where, on taking it out of his pocket, he may consult it as his guide.

After this previous advice, I will point out to the stranger the principal objects in London, which may be thought worth seeing. It is  
neither

neither my intention, nor consistent with my plan, to be prolix, and there are many descriptions and histories of London, easily to be procured, which a curious traveller may peruse for his instruction.

Westminster-abbey, that famous cathedral, admired and respected not only by the English themselves, but on the continent also, is perhaps one of the first objects which will attract his curiosity. It is undoubtedly, an awful and melancholy, but at the same time a pleasing scene, which presents itself on entering this Gothic pile, and walking, in a contemplative mood, between the silent tombs and the sepulchral monuments of kings, heroes, philosophers, and poets. No where can the estimate of man and human things be better made than here; but the inscriptions on the monuments are certainly not the instructors by which to be guided. They are too often a kind of satire, which neither instructs the living, nor honours the ashes of the dead. Indeed, inscriptions in public places, which are likely to remain for a series of years, should, before they are engraved, be submitted to the criticisms, not only of learned men, but even of such as are known to be lovers of truth, lest the honour and sincerity of the age, in which

these inscriptions were made, should become suspected by a late posterity. It is, however, well that these monumental inscriptions are little read, and much less examined by their readers, whether they record what is true or what is not. Some of the monuments in Westminster-abbey, particularly among the modern ones, do credit to the art of their sculptor; but a great many disgrace the place in which they are erected, and offend the eye of the beholder. The church, which is of a Gothic structure, has suffered greatly by the devastations of time; repairs of the outside were begun some years ago, but soon stopped, as I believe, on account of the great expence. The tombs of many British kings and queens, with some of the royal offspring, are in that part of the church, which is called King Henry the Seventh's chapel. During the day-time, somebody is always present, who shews, for a few half-pence, what is remarkable in this chapel, and there is generally sufficient company to make it worth his while to recite his lesson; which he does with such quickness, and monotonous volubility of tongue, that a foreigner, even if he should understand some English, will be at a loss to comprehend him, though he listens with great attention. In a corner of a chapel  
called



called St. Bennet's, the monuments for poets, for dramatic writers, for players, musicians, and some men of letters, are erected, which, for this reason, goes under the general denomination of Poet's Corner. St. Evremond, a Frenchman, and Grabe and Handel, both Germans, have here monuments erected. It may excite surprize, that Pope and Addison, two British writers of such eminence, should here have not even an inscription; not that this was necessary to preserve their memories, for this their writings will do; but as a testimony of the regard of the nation for them. We foreigners, however, are much mistaken in respect to these monuments, when we entertain an opinion, that merit alone can procure the honour of an inscription in this famous abbey, and that these monuments were erected by the nation to shew gratitude and respect to the manes of the dead. In fact this is seldom the case. Relations, patrons, or friends of the deceased, generally furnish the expences, which, if the monument is not costly, do not amount to any great sum; and I believe, many a one, who has received this honour, would wonder, if he arose to life again, how he came to be buried in this abbey, and decorated with such a monumental inscription. Even the great Newton's monument

was not at the expence of the public, or the nation; and he might, perhaps, have been left, without one, if a gentleman, who married the philosopher's niece, had not erected it at his own expence. Sometimes people desirous of idle fame, have paid for the monument of an other, that they, at the same time, might deliver their own name, on his tomb, to posterity. Hence that severe line of Pope :

On poet's tombs see Benson's titles writ !

Indeed foreigners, who judge of the honour of being interred in Westminster-abbey too highly, may be exceedingly mistaken.

Not far from the cathedral is Westminster-hall, built by William Rufus, and admired for its Gothic architecture. This place is very well known to the gentlemen of the law, for the principal law-courts are kept here ; and if peers or peereſſes are to be tried, or other persons impeached by the house of commons, this hall is fitted up in a magnificent manner for that purpose.

The house of lords and that of commons are adjoining to this hall. The latter was in ancient times a chapel dedicated to St. Stephen ; whence the newspapers, sometimes, make use of this name, if they think they tread upon tender ground in what they are saying

ing about parliament, or members of the lower-house. That of the lords is close by, and consists of a large room decorated with tapestry, representing the victory over what was called the invincible Spanish armada. On the throne erected here, the king reads those speeches to both houses of parliament, which we see at full length translated in our foreign Gazettes, and wonder at the condescension with which British kings speak to their subjects.

The Park of St. James's, which king Henry VIII. created out of a swampy field, is at present an ornament to the palace, and a very agreeable place for those who love walking. In some seasons of the year, the mall is so filled with elegant company, either at noon, or, in the longer days, in the evening, that there is hardly room to pass, except by moving along with the crowd, among which ladies of the first nobility, and persons of high rank, are to be seen. Buckingham-house, which is at present the queen's palace, presents a pretty view at the west-end of the Park. It is agreeably situated, and contains very elegant apartments, decorated in a splendid style. The king's private library is likewise here, and can boast of very valuable and magnificent books, which, as it is said, will be, one time or other,  
joined

joined to that in the British Museum, which bears the name of the king's library.

The palace at St. James's was formerly an hospital, and that side which joins to the Park, is pleasantly situated. This old smoky irregular building has oftentimes astonished foreigners, on being told, that this was the residence of British kings, after they had before passed by the magnificent hospital at Greenwich. However, there are very good rooms in this old building; and it is, at present, used only when the king has a levee, or when a court-day is kept. The palace of the prince of Wales, formerly called Carleton-house, has been, within these few years, almost rebuilt, and so conveniently, that, in all probability, this will be in future times the residence of British kings, by which means that of St. James's will be superseded.

Charing-cross is not far from the Park. In the middle of this place a statue of bronze is erected, representing king Charles I. on horseback, without a hat. It is looked upon as a fine piece of workmanship; but I do not know whence the story has taken its origin, that la Seur, the artist who made it, hung himself, because a peasant coming from the country had discovered, that the strap to fasten the saddle round

round the horse's belly was forgotten, and the king, therefore, in danger of falling off. Some of our German writers, who give an account of England, have repeated this idle tale, which is refuted by ocular inspection at any time, as the girth is plainly to be seen.

Whitehall, from the time of Henry VIII. till near the close of the last century, was the royal residence, till the greater part of the old palace was burnt down in 1697, and from that time St. James's has been the residence of the kings of England. What is now called the Banqueting-house, Whitehall, was built in the reign of James I. and is a very fine edifice. It is a small part of a new palace, which was begun to be erected by Inigo Jones; and it was close to this Banqueting house, that the scaffold was erected on which Charles the First was executed; though it is not known which window it was from whence he went to the block.

An object deserving notice is the Pantheon in Oxford-road; a building erected during my time. It was intended for winter's amusements, such as balls, masquerades, concerts, and similar entertainments, to divert the rich and the idle. A society, as I am informed, has advanced no less than ninety thousand pounds

towards its erection, in hopes, as it is said, of great profits, which, however, if it be true, have not answered the expectation.

In Bloomsbury-square the duke of Bedford has a palace, built by Inigo Jones, which, considering its situation in London, is very airy and commands a fine prospect. But of more importance to the curious traveller is the British Museum in Great-Russel-street, a noble and extensive building, formerly the residence of the dukes of Montague. It is, by no means, my intention to give a circumstantial account of the curiosities and valuable libraries, which are to be met with here. A friend to literature, and particularly an admirer of natural history, will derive much pleasure from visiting these large and lofty rooms, dedicated to the Muses; and the longer he examines the contents of them, the greater satisfaction will he receive. I know not that any complete, or satisfactory catalogue, of the curiosities in the British Museum has been published; but it were to be wished, that the public might soon be in possession of one, and that the denominations of the curiosities might be affixed to them in legible characters, in proportion to the height in which they are placed. By these means the inquisitive curiosity of strangers, who

who come to see the Museum, might be gratified, and their questions answered, without giving unnecessary trouble to the gentlemen who attend the company.

The institution of the Museum, which is an honour to the nation, is to be dated from the year 1752. Parliament then granted the various sums for purchasing the house, the curiosities of sir Hans Sloane, and the Harleian manuscripts, together with 30,000 pounds, as a fund for the maintenance of the different officers in the house, to be raised by way of lottery. Since, however, that fund is found to be insufficient for its intention, certain sums have been granted by parliament, from time to time, to make up the deficiencies, which amount, on an average, to a thousand pounds annually. It was likewise enacted by parliament, that forty-one trustees should be nominated, three of whom were to be the archbishop of Canterbury, the lord chancellor, and the speaker of the house of commons, which three should, exclusively, have the right to nominate the different officers of the Museum. The principal ones of these are an upper-librarian, and three sub-librarians; one of these has the care of the manuscripts and the coins, the other that of the natural curiosities, and

and a third that of the printed books. Every one of them has an assistant; and besides these seven, there is one who superintends the reading room. The three librarians, with their assistants, have their stated days and hours, when they shew to the different companies, generally fourteen or fifteen in number, the Museum for about two hours.

On entering the house, the hall corresponds with the magnificence of the rest. It contains, besides a model of the great quadrant at Greenwich, another which represents Blackfriars-bridge. The shells or coffins, in which Egyptian mummies were included, will, besides some other objects of curiosity, immediately engage the attention of a stranger. After ascending the grand stair-case, which, above and on the sides is ornamented with paintings, the first door which is opened, introduces him to some antiquities found in Herculaneum, which, besides some fine urns, most of them dug out of tombs in Calabria, were bought for 8000 pounds of sir William Hamilton. These antiquities are kept in two different rooms, and an antiquarian will find here many entertaining objects for enquiry. A copious catalogue of them has been drawn up, of which the late Dr. Giffard made a very concise



cise abridgment. This collection is augmented from time to time. A much admired Homer's head is here also to be seen, which belonged formerly to Dr. Mead, and is said to be of great antiquity; it is well engraved by an eminent artist, and thus multiplied by prints, for the benefit of those who have no opportunity of seeing the original. A third room full of curiosities and antiquities is contiguous to the foregoing. Most of them belonged formerly to sir Hans Sloane. The Egyptian mummies, of which a full description is in print, are likewise here. One of them is ornamented with glass-beads; a proof that the invention of glass, and the manner of staining it, is of great antiquity. The other Egyptian antiquities, which this room contains, are a gift of Mr. Wortley Montagu, the son of the famous lady Mary Wortley Montagu. In different presses, with glass-doors, various Roman, Tuscan, and some Christian antiquities are disposed. Those curiosities, which were brought over from the lately discovered islands in the Pacific ocean, fill another room. Various valuable coins of gold, silver, and inferior metals, remarkable either for their antiquity or their scarcity, are to be seen in a smaller apartment, which, however, is not generally shewn to every company that comes to see the Museum.

seum. I have seen here an English crown-piece with a head of Charles II. the dye of which was executed in prison by Simon<sup>7</sup>, who was a great friend and admirer of Cromwell the protector, and it procured him his liberty of the king restored. Very few impressions were made; but they are, in my opinion, so excellent, that they yield not to the best coins of antiquity. The Sloane manuscripts are deposited in an adjoining room, and relate chiefly to medicine and to travels. Those which are called Harleian fill two rooms. A catalogue, in two volumes, folio, printed in 1759, mentions 7618 of them. A preface, which is prefixed to it, gives an account of this collection of manuscripts, as well as of the manner in which the catalogue is arranged, which concludes with a good index for references to the manuscripts. A good collection of manuscripts of old Latin classics is also here to be met with; but they are not of great antiquity, though many of them are elegantly written. The rest of this collection relates chiefly to genealogy and heraldry; but there are many on the subject of English history. From this room we enter into another, containing those which are distinguished by the appellation of the

<sup>7</sup> The truth of this story, however, has been questioned.

king's and the Cottonian manuscripts. Mr. David Casley has composed a very valuable catalogue, in which he gives an account of them, and has adorned it with an hundred and fifty specimens of writings of different ages. It is here, that the famous Alexandrian manuscript is to be seen ; the Old Testament of which was published long ago by our countryman Dr. Grabe, and of the New my worthy friend, Dr. Woide, has lately given a splendid impression in fac-simile characters.

We have taken hitherto a view of nine rooms on the eastern side of the Museum, and are entering now into that on the west. Here begins the Sloane collection of natural curiosities ; a description of which would fill whole volumes ; I, therefore, shall content myself merely by giving a general account of what is to be seen in each room. The first contains a variety of gems and precious stones ; likewise various kinds of marble, alabaster, crystal, asbestos, sulphur, and metals. Those fossils and metals, which were given by Mr. Brander to the Museum, are here also<sup>1</sup>. The next room is filled with vari-

<sup>1</sup> The late Dr. Solander has published a description of them, with some copper-plates, under the title of *Fossilia Hantoniensia*, for the greatest part of them is from Hampshire.

ous shells, petrified things, such as fish, human bones, herbs, and other substances. On a table, under a glass cover, various curiosities present themselves, and among others some nautili, or fish to be found in the Mediterranean, who practised the art of navigation, by sailing, earlier than men<sup>8</sup>. Here likewise begins the *hortus siccus*, or a collection of herbs, preserved on leaves of paper, of which there are no less than 334 volumes in the museum. Many of these herbs are, however, badly dried, and therefore spoiled. Those volumes, which are the gift of the duchess of Beaufort, are the finest and in the best preservation; which cannot be said of those which belonged to sir Hans Sloane. A following room exhibits a collection of vegetables and chemical preparations, a number of polypes, scorpions, spiders, tarantulas, flies, scarabees, and other insects. Great quantities of butterflies are to be seen here, in the various situations of that metamorphosis which they undergo. Many sea-weeds, pearls and corals, are also exposed to the view of the curious. Mr. Ellis was the first, in

<sup>8</sup> Pliny mentions this fish, Hist. Nat. lib. ix. c. 29. and Oppianus in the first book of his *Halientica*, gives an entertaining description of the manner in which he navigates on the surface of the sea.

England, who attempted to remove the corals out of the vegetable into the animal kingdom<sup>9</sup>. He published a treatise on the subject, with the addition of some copper-plates, and the very originals from which they are taken are here preserved under glass, over the chimney-piece. The contents of this room are arranged according to the Linnæan system, as are likewise the birds in the next. It is a pretty collection, but is no ways comparable to that which belonged to the late sir Ashton Lever. A fine orang-outang, the nearest relation to man, resides here among the birds. The last room appropriated to natural history contains several kinds of fish and amphibiums. A number of serpents is here preserved, and among them a rattle-snake. This collection was, for the most part, made in Surinam, and given as a present to the museum, by the late marquis of Rockingham.

We now quit the rooms appropriated to natural curiosities, and descend the stair-case to go into the library. This stair-case is different

<sup>9</sup> Before Mr. Ellis, Mr. Peyssonel, a Frenchman, did the same; and lately another Frenchman, Mr. Durande, has restored them, apparently with very strong arguments, to the vegetables again. See *Nouveaux Memoires de l'Academie de Dijon*, Partie ii. de l'an. 1783. Memoir xi.

from that which I have mentioned before. It has no grandeur, but on descending it, various curiosities, such as a stuffed crocodile, various aquatic-animals, some American canoes, and some Greenland fishing-boats, meet the eye. The library occupies no less than twelve very considerable rooms. In the first those books are placed, which are given as presents, and those of which a copy is to be delivered, on their being entered in Stationer's-hall. The library, which was bequeathed by major Edwards, fills the second. This gentleman left also 7000 l. to the Museum, to increase the library with new books by the interest of this fund. The third room contains the library of Dr. Birch, which makes an appearance less considerable than it would have done, because all those books of which the Museum had duplicates, were sold by auction. Sir Hans Sloane's library, which relates mostly to philosophy, natural history, and medicine, takes up the six following, and the king's library the three last rooms. Close to the library is a very convenient reading-room, to accommodate those who wish to peruse books or manuscripts, because none are permitted to be taken out of the Museum.

I shall

I shall finish here my short account of this noble institution, and only add this observation, that the whole is costly, worth seeing, and honourable to the nation ; that, when taken all together, it has not its equal ; but when considered in its separate branches, almost each of them singly, may be surpassed by some other collections, even in England itself, such as that of the late Dr. Hunter, and that of Mr. Parkinson, besides many others. Though I have seen more than one general specification of the various contents of this Museum, yet none is to be relied upon, because the curiosities, as well as the books, increase from year to year.

In giving this account of the British Museum, I have been somewhat the more circumstantial, thinking it an object which cannot but attract the attention of the curious stranger. I am happy that I can speak of it as a national institution still in being ; for I almost trembled for its fate, when, in 1780, during those horrid religious riots, the Gothic incendiaries were much inclined to reduce this noble edifice, together with its valuable contents, to ashes.

We shall now direct our way to the north-east, where we see the Foundling Hospital before us. This building, with its neat chapel, resembles more a residence of opulence, than an hos-

hospital erected by charity. What I have observed already in another place, that, in such institutions, too much of the money contributed, is laid out in the building, and for the support of those who hold offices in these receptacles of objects of charity, is applicable in this instance also. A building, perhaps, more to the purpose, might have been raised at less expence; and from such saving more children might have been benefited by this institution than now are, when hardly above a hundred are annually received. A concert of sacred music is generally performed once a year in the chapel of this hospital; and I remember when it was well attended, and, therefore, very beneficial to the charity. But, as this attendance was more the offspring of fashion than of true charity and good-will to the institution, it is fallen off very much; and as such things grow old, the hospital, I believe, has of late not received so much benefit by these spiritual concerts as formerly.

Gray's Inn, which is not at a great distance from hence, may be considered as a kind of college, where gentlemen reside who study or carry on the business of the common law. Lincoln's Inn is for the same purpose; and has, as well as Gray's Inn, an agreeable garden. Lincoln's-



coln's Inn Fields are an extensive space of ground, laid out by Inigo Jones, who, as it is said, took the area or base of the largest pyramid in Egypt, for the exact dimensions of this elegant square.

The Charter-house, which is more towards the east, was formerly a monastery of the Carthusian order, but was secularised at the time of the Reformation. It is at present a charitable institution, for the support of some poor old tradesmen, who are very comfortably provided for; and contains also a good grammar-school, the head masters of which are generally men who have distinguished themselves by their learning, and several of them are well known from their writings.

Smithfield, not far distant, is a large place where, on certain days in the week, a great market for cattle is kept. It is, perhaps, the greatest in its kind in all Europe. In my opinion, it would be better if such a market-place were not within the city, but rather without. Perhaps it would be well if there were two, one on the north side of London, near Pancras; and another on the south, in the neighbourhood of George's-fields. Much mischief, which is oftentimes occasioned by driving the cattle through the streets of London to Smith-

field, might thus be prevented. Slaughter-houses might be erected near these markets, and humanity should provide reservoirs of water to satisfy the thirst of the poor cattle; for it raises compassion to see these devoted victims, particularly the sheep, drinking eagerly out of the kennels in the street, when they are driven to market, and even not indulged in this by their cruel drivers.

On one side of this market-place, St. Bartholomew's Hospital presents itself; a noble building, and one of the best charitable institutions, where sick and wounded persons are taken care of. The number of those who receive the benefit of this charity is very great; the afflicted are tenderly nursed, and attended by the most skilful physicians and surgeons; which, indeed, to the honour of the nation, is, besides remarkable cleanliness, the character of most English hospitals.

In the neighbourhood of Moorfields, are two hospitals for lunatics, and people afflicted with madness. That of St. Luke's designed for incurables, is amply endowed, and lately rebuilt at very great expence. That which is called Bethlehem, or Bedlam, has more the appearance of a palace, than the residence of madness. Here scenes present themselves, which, indeed,

indeed, may humble human pride, and teach poor mortals to what degradation they are subject. Hardly ever Psychology will account for it, how it happens, that the English, so eminent among other nations for good sense and sound understanding, are so apt to be deprived of their reason; and whence it arises, that madness seems to be more at home in England than in other countries. Not only large hospitals are erected for lunatics, but a number of private mad-houses are necessary to confine people deprived of their senses. Shakespeare himself seems to acknowledge, that in his country more madmen may be met with than any where else, when he introduces Hamlet in a conversation with a clown<sup>1</sup>. If physiological causes have their share in this evil, moral ones, arising from education and the manner of living, certainly contribute greatly towards it. The opinion of Grosley<sup>2</sup> is not supported by much probability, that an abundant and cheap

<sup>1</sup> *Hamlet*. Ay, marry, why was he sent into England?

*Clown*. Why, he was mad; he shall recover his wits there; or if he do not, it is no great matter there.

*Hamlet*. Why?

*Clown*. It will not be seen in him; there the men are as mad as he.

HAMLET, Act v. sc. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Londres, vol. ii. p. 22.

import-

importation of French wines, would greatly lessen the melancholy humour, and the propensity towards madness, among the English, making them at the same time more pliable subjects, and less averse to passive obedience. He had no reason to recommend to them the doctrine of Solomon: *dare vinum iis qui amara sunt animo et bibent*. They really drink plentifully as it is. French wines are imported cheaper, by the late commercial treaty, than they were before; yet the number of those unhappy persons who labour under madness has not decreased; and if these wines had the quality of making people passively obedient, I hope every true Englishman, who has the full use of his reason, would carefully avoid drinking them. I have seen several strangers, who thought it inconsistent, that so elegant a building as Bedlam, should be inhabited by people deprived of reason, and be appointed for a residence of madness and insanity; but, if all mansions, eminent for their architecture, were to be inhabited only by men of sense and wisdom, how many palaces must either stand empty, or their owners be addressed in the words of the poet, *Heteres migrata coloni*! On the pillars of the gateway of the hospital, two fine statues, in a reclining posture, are seen; the one representing

senting raving, and the other melancholy madness. They are the work of a countryman of ours, who came from Holfatia, the father of Colley Cibber, and are esteemed valuable pieces of statuary<sup>1</sup>.

Not far from Whitechapel, on the side of the road, another noble building presents itself which owes its existence to charity, called the London-hospital, and is supported by voluntary contributions. Very near two hundred beds are here to be found, for the reception of the sick, and those poor who are hurt by accidents. The latter are admitted at any time, day or night, without any farther recommendation than the misery and misfortune under which they labour. Nay, since the number of those who want assistance, is sometimes greater than the inside of the hospital will admit, those who cannot be accommodated within, are taken care of and cured without. It is said, that since the institution of this charity, which took place in the year 1740, very near 200,000 persons have been dismissed from the hospital, after being cured and restored to health.

<sup>1</sup> In the German original a more ample account of this famous hospital is given, which, however, as being well known in this country, is here omitted.

The Tower of London, with its curiosities, is one of those places, which by strangers, who come to see this metropolis, are generally visited among the first. Not only foreigners, but the country people also when they are possessed of any curiosity, flock to the Tower, to stare at the wild beasts, to be agreeably surprised by the strange sight of the horse armoury, and to be dazzled on viewing the crown-jewels by dim candle-light, shewn by a woman behind some rails, who recites her lesson faster than a nun repeats her psalms \*. The English money is coined in the Tower, which is done with astonishing expedition. The places and offices of the mint are rather lucrative, and some of them have occasionally been given to men eminent for their learning, because the salaries are considerable, though little is required to be done. I need not mention, that state-prisoners are kept within the Tower, and that many illustrious persons, who have been beheaded, are buried in the church which is there. The keeper of the state-prisoners derives a kind of dignity from the persons he has in his custody; and, therefore, is called not merely gaoler, but

\* There is a printed Historical Description of the Tower of London and its Curiosities, which will serve as a guide to the inquisitive.

gentleman-goaler; a kind of title, unknown to us in Germany, which may rather excite wonder, since no nation is more ridiculously fond of titles, and more inclined to invent new ones than ours.

On leaving the Tower, and going up Thames-street, we come to the Custom-house, an extensive building, where thousands of oaths are daily made, with as much indifference and as little concern, as if they were but compliments and empty assurances. Those who have, on account of duties, business to transact here, have the best opportunities of practising self-denial, and improving the virtue of patience.

A little farther on we arrive at Billingsgate, the seat of politeness, the *forum* of eloquence, and the best market for fish. Hence the proverbial expressions of the English, *Billingsgate language*, *Billingsgate eloquence*. Whoever wants to witness natural powers of speech, figures of oratory, well chosen epithets, strong expressions, delivered with an audible voice, in the vulgar English tongue, let him offend one of these fish-women, and he will be astonished to find, that none of them yields to Homer's Juno, who, incapable of subduing her anger, burst  
out

out instantly into a volley of abusive language<sup>s</sup>.

A little farther from Billingsgate is London bridge, with the water-works. The former is much complained of as being always in want of repairs; and the others are originally the invention of Peter Matrice, a German, but greatly improved by Mr. Hadley. Soon after I had seen these water-works in London, I saw those at Marly near Paris, when they were still in use, but I could not help observing immediately how much superior those in London are, in regard to the simplicity of their construction; for that they are infinitely more useful than those in France needs no proof. An officer at Marly who superintended the water-works informed me that annually about 20,000 pounds sterling were required to keep them in order; and how much smaller is the sum that keeps those in London in repairs, which provide the greatest part of the city with water! It is conducted in leaden pipes into the houses; and, I believe it is from mere necessity that this unwholesome metal is made use of, since it is not conducive to health to keep water in

<sup>s</sup> Ἦεν δ' ἐκ ἰχθυὸς γένος χολοί, ἀλλὰ πρὸς πυλᾶ

Αὐτὰρ κτετομοιοισι.

Iliad. Δ. v. 24.

lead;



lead; and yet most cisterns in houses, I have observed, are made of this metal. It is said, that the income of the proprietors of these water-works, who are made a company, has suffered since the time the metropolis became provided likewise with water from what is called the New-river. To the latter a kind of preference is given, and it may be had at a time, when the London water-works, on account of a low tide, can furnish none. How beneficial the conducting of the water, in pipes, through all London must be, when fires happen, may easily be conceived. The regulations in regard to extinguishing fires are exceedingly good, and the engines, I believe, are the best ever to be met with. Nevertheless, it will happen, that in winter time, during a hard frost, or when, at low tide, the London water works cannot furnish a supply, the engines can, at least for a time, do no execution for want of water. Large cisterns, placed at proper distances, always kept filled up, might perhaps, prevent such a want, but hitherto nothing of the kind is done.

Near the bridge, is a great column, called the Monument, which was erected as a memorial of the great fire of London. It is the work of sir Christopher Wren. The column  
of

of Trajan at Rome, is only 184 feet high<sup>6</sup>, and this is 202. The monument, though but little more than a hundred years old, is said to be but in an indifferent condition; and it is thought, that, within no great space of time, it must be taken down. Opinions differ, whether this be owing to the shaking of the ground, by numberless waggons and coaches that pass by, or whether it is the fault of the architect; but, in all probability, it is to be attributed to the cause which I first mentioned.

On going from the monument towards the north, we come to the Royal-exchange, which was built in 1556 by sir Thomas Gresham, who, under certain conditions, left it in his will to the Mercers-company, and to the mayor and commonalty of the city of London. But the original exchange being destroyed by the fire of London, an hundred years afterwards, it was rebuilt in that magnificent style in which it now presents itself. In the midst of the area a statue of Charles II. in a Roman dress, is placed within some iron rails. The mean flattery of the Hamburgh merchants, then residing in London<sup>7</sup>, has engraved, at the bottom of the pedestal, an inscription, which

<sup>6</sup> KEYSER's Travels, p. 717. Germ. Edit.

<sup>7</sup> RAPIN, tom. ii. fol. 734.

is a satire upon the court it was intended to honour, and a monument of meanness for those who paid for it. Charles II is called *delicia generis humani, pacis Europæ arbiter, marium dominus ac vindex*, at a time when the court did every thing to encroach upon the liberty of the people, and manifested a great ill will to the city of London.

Formerly the merchants used to assemble on change between one and two o'clock, to transact business, but at present it is delayed till half after two, nay even later. Almost every nation, and every branch of trade, has its own walk upon the exchange, where they may be looked for, and where their different languages are spoken. On viewing from a window, or a balcony within the area, the crowd below at full exchange time, it excites pleasure to see such a number of people busy below, and hearing the confused sound of so many voices, and so many different languages, ascending like the humming of bees. Without paying any regard to the distinctions of sects, or religious opinions, every one pretends to honesty, every one claims the character of doing justice to others, as a certain proof that this society in which we live, cannot subsist without virtue. The man of twenty thousand pounds is pushed

here against another of forty thousand, and he perhaps against one of an hundred and more thousands. None of them thinks he has enough; no one is satisfied; and amongst them may, perhaps, be seen a man, who, after having appeared in the gazette, and just got a certificate, yet struts along with so much confidence, that a stranger might be inclined to take him for the richest man there. Not many years elapse before an almost entire new set of faces appear on the exchange. The great gulf of London swallows all, and the burying grounds in this great metropolis, together with the churchyards of the neighbouring villages, are stored with the bones of the rich as well as of the poor. The generality of them are soon forgotten, sometimes even by their heirs, when they have rested hardly eight days under ground. The revenues of the Royal-Exchange are pretty considerable; and were, perhaps, formerly still more so, when the upper part of the building was fitted up as shops, in which various sorts of merchandises were exposed for sale.

The founder of the exchange, sir Thomas Gresham, ordered also in his will, that his extensive mansion should be sacred to the Muses, and lectures be read, at stated times, on divinity, astro-

astronomy, music, geometry, law, medicine, and rhetoric. Salaries were likewise provided by him for those who were appointed as professors for this purpose. But though, after his death, the house was changed into a college which came into some repute, and lectures were read, yet all this is changed at present. Minerva has been obliged to make room for Mercury, and the Excise-office is built on the spot where formerly the college stood; the lectures are, for form sake, read in a room over the Royal-Exchange, by persons, who, as it is said, are not always qualified for such a function, merely to qualify themselves for receiving the salaries. It is no wonder, if the abuse of such institutions, and the perversion of the intentions of deceased donors, should prevent others from disposing of their property by their wills, in purposes beneficial to the public.

Not far from the Royal-Exchange is the General Post-office, which, on account of the business transacted there, is, perhaps, the greatest in the world. The revenues belong to the state, and amounted, in the middle of the last century, to about 5000 l. but are risen, at present, to not less than 450,000 l. Correspondence has, on account of commerce, and for various other reasons, not only greatly in-

creased; but government has raised the postage to a high degree, and every cover of a letter, every inclosure, some few in the mercantile way only excepted, are to be paid for as single letters, and according to the weight at a pretty high rate. For the convenience of the inhabitants of London and its environs, a Penny-post is instituted, and by means of seventy-four messengers, letters may be sent, daily, at different hours, to any part within the bills of mortality. There are no less than 334 houses appointed for the reception of Penny-post letters; and great as this number may appear to foreigners, yet I believe that not one of them is unemployed; for I am of opinion, that no nation is more given to letter-writing than the English. Besides people of business, both sexes seem to be fond of an epistolary intercourse.

The buildings of the Bank have been greatly enlarged, within my time. The new wing, which has been added, is in the inside very well adapted to its purpose; but the outside, on account of the light being only admitted from the top, has some resemblance to the prison of Newgate; so that Plutus who is here confined, may complain like the other of

Lucian,

Lucian, that he suffers great hardship, by being restrained from seeing day-light, I have reason, however, to think, that he sometimes circulates in free and open air, when the wants of government incline the bank to set him at liberty, on granting a proper acknowledgment for such a favour.

The house of the lord-mayor, which goes under the denomination of the Mansion-house, is in the neighbourhood of the Royal-Exchange; a clumsy, heavy building, but not wholly without an appearance of magnificence. It lies, hid almost, in a corner, and is well blackened by smoke. The habitation of the lord-mayor, and his state-coach, bear some proportion and resemblance, in regard to taste, to each other; yet the latter never makes its appearance in public, but it is admired and crowded about by the London populace. How slightly lord Burlington thought of the Mansion-house appears from the answer he gave, to a citizen who consulted him about a proper person to carve the bas-relief in the pediment of that edifice: "Any body, he replied, may do well enough for such a building". But how credulous must the man be, who could believe, that a gentleman came on purpose, every year, from the North of England, to Lon-

don, for no other reason, but merely to stand up against the wall of the mansion-house to shew his contempt for its architecture <sup>6</sup>.

Almost close to the mansion-house stands the church of St. Stephen's, Wallbrook, which is looked upon as the master-piece of sir Christopher Wren. The English are of opinion, that all Italy has nothig comparable to the inside of it, in regard to taste, proportion, and beauty. The church, however, seems, at least in some parts, to be much in want of light, which, perhaps, is owing to its being so closely surrounded by buildings.

The East-India-house in Leadenhall-street is well constructed for its purpose, and has, behind, large convenient warehouses with a garden.

Sion-College, formerly a monastery, I mention merely, because there is a kind of public library. A copy of every book entered in Stationers-hall, should be delivered to this library, and every clergyman of the church of England, who is promoted to a living within London, should present the library with a book, worth at least ten shillings; but, notwithstanding these regulations, the library is not very rich

<sup>6</sup> Pour se donner le plaisir de piffer contre ce ridicule edifice, GROSLEY's Londres, vol. iii, p. 69.



in good, well-chosen modern books, and much less so in those printed abroad in foreign languages.

Not far from hence is the famous Grub-street, where poor authors and scriblers have been said to live in their garrets somewhat like the wretched Codrus of Juvenal :

. . . . . Quem tegula sola tuetur  
A pluvia, molles ubi reddunt ova columbæ;  
Nil habuit Codrus.

Sat. iii. v. 201.

English authors frequently make use of the expressions of a Grub-street writer or a production of Grub-street ; and I have seen foreigners, just coming from abroad to England, who, from mistaken notions, thought Grub-street to be inhabited by a great part of the London literati and some eminent booksellers ; but there are few, if any, authors who live there now, whatever may have been the case formerly.

Guildhall is, as we should say in Germany, the Senate-house of London. It is an old Gothic structure. Within the hall several courts of judicature are kept, and some good monuments are to be seen. But a foreigner will be, at first sight, much struck with the enormous figures of two giants, with which those who live in the neighbourhood frighten their per-

verse children, in the same manner as the Romans did, in the time of Martial, with the ridiculous production of the potter :

*Sum figuli lusus rufi persona Batavi :*

*Quæ tu derides, hæc timet ora puer.*

*Lib. xiv. Epigr. 176.*

Here, at Guildhall, the state-lotteries are drawn. The spirit of gaming, which is already so prevalent among the English, is greatly encouraged by them ; and it is hardly credible, how much mischief is done by these annual lotteries and the gambling by which it is attended. It is to be regretted, that the morals of the people should be hazarded, merely to procure a small addition to the revenues of the state.

Not far from hence, Bow-church presents itself. It is the work of sir Christopher Wren, and the steeple with which it is ornamented, is pronounced to be the finest in England. In this church eight sermons, known by the denomination of Boyle's Lectures, are annually preached. Having heard much in praise of these learned lectures, before I came to England, I made it a point the first opportunity to go and hear them ; but how great was my astonishment, when, instead of a crowded congregation, intermixed with numbers of learned men and divines, I found very few people, and mostly old women

women in the church, to profit and to be edified by these philosophical and theological discourses! They were, formerly, few instances excepted, printed and published, which, perhaps, was the reason that they were not much attended, when they were preached; but at present, they are neither more attended, nor so frequently printed. The subject seems to be exhausted, and the fifty pounds, which are to be paid to the preacher, are, as I have been informed, not seldom given to a clergyman whose circumstances may require the aid of such a small sum, though he may not be equal to the task which he is desired to undertake.

Christ's Hospital, or, as it is often called, the Blue-coat Hospital, is a charitable and useful institution. Perhaps more than a thousand children of both sexes are here educated at the same time, under the care of different masters, though never sufficient in number for such a quantity of children, which is a fault most English schools labour under. The girls are instructed by women, in those things, which are intended to make them useful for domestic business

At the west-end of Newgate-street a gate and a prison were to be seen, when I first came to London, but both have been since pulled down

down. The prison is erected in a street, close by, called the Old-Bailey, and is thought to be one of the strongest and securest which could be planned by modern architecture; yet, in the year 1780, during the famous riots, it was set on fire; but has since been perfectly restored. Public executions, which some years past took place at Tyburn, are now performed in the above mentioned street, before one of the doors of the prison, where the gallows, on such occasions, are erected. This new regulation has, at least, the preference so far to the former custom, that it prevents a numerous populace from being idle a whole hanging-day, which was generally the case, when the long processions of the malefactors, from Newgate to Tyburn, subsisted; and all the streets, through which they passed, were in a kind of uproar. I have said something more on this subject in another place\*. The burning of women, who, according to law, for some crimes are condemned to the stake, being likewise performed in the Old Bailey, is complained of as a great nuisance, and not without reason. In the same street the Session-house and Surgeons-hall are to be seen. The former has lately been rebuilt on a much better plan than before.

\* Page 76.

On going from Newgate-street towards the south, we meet with two monuments of true architecture, the College of Physicians in Warwick-lane, and the cathedral of St. Paul's. The former was built after the united designs of sir Christopher Wren and Inigo Jones. The hall of the college, where the members of it meet, is spacious, and well ornamented with paintings and works of sculpture; it has also an anatomical theatre and a library. Even in the time of king Henry VIII. the physicians belonging to this college, were formed into a corporation, consisting of a president and thirty fellows. According to the charter, which they then obtained, no person is to be permitted to practise physic in London, and within seven miles of its environs, unless first properly licensed by the college: but, I believe, there are in no place in the world, notwithstanding good and necessary regulations, more quacks and mountebanks who, unlicensed, murder with greater impunity than in London.

The cathedral of St. Paul's, that noble piece of architecture by sir Christopher Wren, would appear to infinitely more advantage, if it stood less surrounded with other buildings, and had better avenues. The bare walls of the inside make it, likewise, greatly inferior to that of  
St.

St. Peter at Rome, which, in some respects has served for its model : for the latter is decorated with paintings, very magnificent monuments, and other works of statuary and sculpture. Some very eminent painters have offered to decorate the cathedral with paintings, without demanding any reward for their labours ; but from Gothic prejudices, and bigotted principles, some people have refused accepting such kind and liberal offers. The cupola only is painted in the inside by sir James Thornhill, and has all the advantages of the descending light. Under this cupola runs a gallery round, where a person whispering or speaking in a very low voice against the wall, is heard, very distinctly and very loudly, by another who stands opposite him on the other side ; though the distance between the person that speaks, and the other that hears, is no less than 143 feet. The principles of this kind of architecture were well known to the ancients. The famous ear of Dionysius of Syracuse is, among others, a proof of it ; and there is no doubt, but that the priests in heathen temples, where oracles were given, used arts like this to carry on their imposture, and to promote superstition. On the outside of the cupola runs a spacious gallery, from which there is the finest view of  
London

London, and the country adjacent, on a clear day, when the town is not too much covered with smoke. Above this another gallery is built, which bears the name of the golden gallery; and the whole height of the church is said to be 440 feet<sup>9</sup>. There are many and very minute accounts of this cathedral separately printed, or in books to be met with, to which I must refer the curious.

The grammar school, which is commonly called St. Paul's-school, is in good repute; but I cannot persuade myself, that the number of those who instruct is adequate to the number of them who are to be instructed.

Apothecaries-hall is not far from St. Paul's. Here two excellent laboratories are to be found, and what belongs to the *materia medica* is nowhere to be had more genuine than here. A room is built, within the hall, for a library, but hitherto it is without books. I have here, however, met with a small collection of books relating to botany, though it was not in the room designed for the library. Here also have

<sup>9</sup> The cathedral church at Strasburg, in Alsace, is 574 geometrical feet high, and consequently exceeds that of St. Paul's considerably; but the prospect of the country, when I had taken the trouble to ascend it, I found by no means equal to that from St. Paul's.

I seen an excellent, and pretty complete collection, of samples of seeds, drugs, spices, and other such things, which are used in medicine. The fine botanical garden at Chelsea belongs likewise to the Apothecaries company; but it is said that they intend to dispose of it.

Blackfriars-bridge has been built within my time, and though it has cost a great sum of money, yet it is said that it will be soon in want of repairs. It commands a fine prospect; but it is justly remarked, that the balustrade on each side, should be either higher or lower, not to intercept the view of the foot-passengers, which it does at present. I remember, that the Surry-side of this bridge, which is now covered with a number of houses on the side of an excellent road, was a mere swamp when I first came to London; but in its present improved state it shews what English industry, ingenuity, and English money, can effect within a few years. Almost at the foot of the south side of this bridge, the Albion-mills, and Mr. Parkinson's Museum, formerly sir Ashton Lever's, highly deserve the notice of the curious stranger<sup>rd</sup>.

<sup>rd</sup> In the German original an ample account of this Museum is given; but a large and satisfactory catalogue of its contents having been published since, it is omitted in this translation.

At



## L O N D O N.

At the end of Fleet-street, a kind of gate is erected, which is called Temple-bar. It has been praised as a fine piece of architecture; but it is in fact an obstruction of a great thoroughfare; and it were to be wished, that the several attempts which have been made to remove it, had been successful. Close by this gate is the Temple, a very extensive building, formerly the residence of the knights Templars, but now a kind of college for gentlemen who study or practise the law. The situation of the Temple is very agreeable, with a garden that borders on the Thames. The church which is here, is an old Gothic structure, and was saved with difficulty from the fire of London in 1666. The clergyman, who has the living, is called Master of the Temple, and his place is not only respectable, but also endowed with a pretty good income. Men of eminence and learning such as a Sherlock, a Gregory Sharpe, and others, have enjoyed it.

Somerset-house, in the Strand, was an old ruinous, Gothic building, when I first came to London, but it is now one of the finest in regard to architecture, and one of the costliest, considering the expences it has required, though yet unfinished. The Royal Society, the  
So-

Society of Antiquaries, the Royal Academy for painting, sculpture, and architecture, have here suitable apartments for their meetings, and the latter for their annual exhibitions; but the greatest part of this extensive building is appropriated to different offices, belonging to different departments of government.

On taking a boat, at the stairs near Somerset-house, a stranger, who wishes to get acquainted with the situation of London, may go on the river to Lambeth. During this little water excursion, he will have a view of the Adelphi Buildings, and the terrace before them; he will see Whitehall, and pass under Westminster-bridge. This bridge is without doubt, in all respects, the best in London. It was built by Charles Labelye, a foreigner, now almost forgotten, and who published, in 1751, a description of it. The palace of the Archbishop of Canterbury at Lambeth has nothing extraordinary, and looks more like an old monastery, or an old castle, than a palace. It has, however, received some additional erections of a more modern date, which make it rather a convenient mansion. Within the palace is a library, which contains good books, and a number of manuscripts, chiefly relating

to

to English church affairs. The famous gardens of Vauxhall, so celebrated on the continent, and of which there are so many feeble imitations, are within the parish of Lambeth. Various classes of people resort thither in the evening during the summer, for different kinds of amusements; but, even a philosopher may spend there agreeable hours at a small expence. He may hear good music and singing; he may refresh himself in the cool of the evening; he may make observations on men and manners, retire in good time, and rise the next morning without in the least repenting the pleasures of the last evening. This, indeed, may not be the case with a great number of those who frequent these gardens, and derive from thence causes for a long repentance.

Ranelagh, with its garden, is a place for evening's amusement, like Vauxhall; but the company here is more select, and upon the whole of greater rank. More decency is likewise observable; for only tea and coffee are served. Those who choose to drink wine, cannot do it within the rotunda, where the company is assembled, but must go, if they chose it, to other apartments. This rotunda is reckoned to be an elegant piece of architecture,

and the company walk round in a perpetual circle; so that it would be no wonder if many heads grew giddy. The music and the orchestra are very good; but the garden, though agreeable, is by no means equal to that at Vauxhall.

Not far from Ranelagh is Chelsea-hospital, a noble building, which forms three different squares. It is for invalids of the army, as that of Greenwich is for those of the navy. This latter attracts the attention of foreigners more than the former; and I really believe, that no building of the kind is to be met with any where, which could pretend to so much magnificence, order, and cleanliness, as this hospital. The chapel, and the hall which belong to it, are worth seeing; the latter has paintings by sir James Thornhill, which are much esteemed, particularly those on the ceiling. Not far from the hospital is a very fine park, which belongs to the king, but is open to the public. Some high grounds in it, command the most beautiful prospects over London and the Thames. In this park is likewise the Royal Observatory, or as it is called, after the celebrated astronomer, Flamsteed-house. It is not to be seen, without particular recommendation to the royal professor of astronomy, who

who is to reside here. The prospects from this house are extremely fine, and the room which is particularly appropriated to astronomical observations, is on the flat ground, where the two quadrants are fixed, and where the principal telescopes and other mathematical instruments are to be seen. Here every day, and every night, the heavens are observed, and the observations properly minuted<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> In the original German, a short account of Deptford, Woolwich, Kensington, Kew, Windsor, Roehampton, and Sion-house, is added, merely with a view to give a foreigner an idea of those places; it is, therefore, as unnecessary for an English reader, not translated.

ON THE CHARACTER OF THE  
ENGLISH.

IT requires great knowledge and great sincerity, to delineate the character of single persons according to truth, and to mark those striking features by which they distinguish themselves from others; but, much more is necessary to draw the character of a whole nation, and to point out its true characteristic traits. The difficulty increases with respect to the English, since there is hardly a people on the globe, among whom more singular, more eccentric, and more opposite characters, are to be met with than among them. Liberty, which this island is blessed with, permits every man, if he chooses it, to appear as he really is, and consequently there is less necessity for dissimulation. Human nature is in every corner of the earth the same; and, in fact, there is a similarity of men in all climates. Accidental things, among which education, government, established customs and manners stand first, are the principal causes of the distinctions among nations. The spirit of the Greeks remained a long

long time in their colonies; and the English manners, as well as the English way of thinking, have preserved themselves longer than a century, with very little alteration, in the American colonies, which were formerly the habitation of what are called savages. The impressions made by the climate on its new inhabitants are slow, and of no great significance. If air and weather, as is so positively asserted by some, and, without examining, adopted by others, were the chief causes of the manners, the ways of thinking, and of the national character of a people, the ancient Britons, in the time of Cæsar, should have been something like the modern English; but, whoever will examine, with some attention, the Commentaries of Cæsar, or read the Life of Agricola, written by Tacitus, will soon be better informed. If I except the inhabitants of Wales, very little old British blood and customs<sup>a</sup> will be found in the rest of England.

Some,

<sup>a</sup> There is, however, an assertion of Tacitus, in regard to the old Britons, still applicable to those of modern times, that they readily comply with the levies of men, and with the imposition of taxes: *Britanni delectum et tributa, et injuncta imperii munera impigre obeunt.* TAC. Vit. Agr. c. 13. There is likewise still remaining some evidence of

### 358 ON THE CHARACTER

Some, perhaps, will think it not very difficult to make a complete drawing of the English character, when so many have already written on this subject. They will say, As you have resided so long in this country, you need only point out, from the observations of others, what is true, and reject that which is not; you may tell us where there is a likeness, and where there is none. I confess, however, that after some investigation, this reasoning will not be found altogether just. I have read what many have written on the subject, both foreigners and English; but several things, which they have advanced, as truly characteristic, did not appear to me to be so, and others I thought by no means satisfactory. Most of the foreigners, who have written on the English nation, did, a few only excepted, reside but a short time in London, oftentimes without being sufficiently acquainted with the language of the country; they frequented besides companies of no great note, coffee-houses and play-houses, and thought themselves, afterwards, qualified to draw the picture of a na-

the truth of Horace's observation, that the Britons had a dislike to foreigners:

Visam Britannos hospitibus feros, Lib. iii. Od. iv. v. 33.  
tion,



tion, with whose manners, genius, and modes of thinking, they were not much better acquainted than with those of a people, whose habitations they had seen merely on a geographical map. There is no trusting to this class of travellers, who take the much corrupted manners of the metropolis for those of the whole country. The farther off from London, the more, in general, the air as well as the manners grow purer. The people appear more civil, and tractable, more sociable and frugal, and more given to cleanliness. Riches and luxury are less visible, but the generality of the inhabitants of the country seem to enjoy contentment, and the blessings of liberty. This, probably, was formerly the case in a higher degree, before London became so extensive; and when the people who live at a distance, were not so much infected with the mad desire of coming to the metropolis, and of establishing themselves there. The roads were formerly bad, and travelling tedious and expensive; nor did the great and the rich so frequently and expeditiously, as they now do, go into the most distant parts of the kingdom with their servants and attendants, who carry the follies and vices of the capital, so suc-

## 360 ON THE CHARACTER

cessfully among the people who live remote from it.

I have read sketches of the English national character, drawn by Englishmen themselves; but few of them are remarkable for their impartiality. Some represent it in a very gloomy light, as if the nation were infected with every vice and immorality; as if it were in a desponding state, and every virtue, and all kind of happiness, on the point of departing from the island. These moral painters are generally over-pious enthusiasts, who lose sight of human nature, and are ready to sacrifice to their unreasonable zeal all those, whose blood is not as thick and as heavy as their own. But they are no more to be credited than those who extol their nation and their country so far above all others in the universe, as if no sense, no virtue, no happiness were to be met with, but in their own island. Such prejudices and such idle pride, betray only, how unacquainted with foreign countries those are who adopt them. In my opinion, the English, of all cultivated nations, approach the nearest to the character of what man, in reality, ought to be; and this, I think, is their chief characteristic. It is, likewise, a very just observation of Mr. Hume, that

that "the English, of any people in the universe, have the least of a national character; "unless this very singularity may pass for "one". In former times, the resemblance between the English and other nations was stronger, and the singularities now so observable and striking to foreigners, are, principally, to be dated from that period when the Revolution established liberty and the constitution on surer ground, and gave to the manners and the way of thinking among the people a greater air of freedom, and consequently to their character and government, a different colouring from what it had before.

Education forms in all countries the manners of the inhabitants, and that in England is something different from all others. I cannot help thinking, that the taste of the English in regard to their modern gardening resembles that which is generally shewn in their manner of education. Nature is preferred to every thing; it is frequently assisted with a helping hand; but care is taken lest art should spoil it. This I take, partly, to be the reason, why the number of those who approach nearest to the dignity and the destination of man, is greater

3 HUME's Essays, vol. i. p. 215.

among

among the English than among other nations. To study to find out, as Montesquieu has done, a system, which, when followed, will form by rules, slaves for tyrants, is repugnant to humanity. Are we, if it were possible, to alter human nature by education, that it may fit an artificial form of government; or are we rather to adapt our governments to the nature of man? In England, both the inhabitants and the constitution are formed for freedom. That servile respect for those who are called people of quality, or for those possessed of riches, which is inculcated into children, by example as well as precept, in other countries<sup>3</sup>, is not very common in England. The poorest man will be heard to say, that his shilling is as good as that of the rich; and I have known instances, where patriotic schoolmasters would not punish a boy who had transgressed, before he was found guilty by twelve of his school-fellows, to make them early sensible of the privilege of a Briton, not to be judged in an arbitrary or a despotical way, but by his peers, or equals. In general the children of both sexes in England, are educated with a much greater degree of indulgence than in other countries. In some eminent

<sup>4</sup> The states of America are to be excepted, and also France, if the Revolution is completed.

grammar-schools, a kind of severe punishment, called *flogging*, is still in use; but it is supposed, that it rather hardens than reforms.

An indulgent education, though it will sometimes be productive of evils, has, notwithstanding, great advantages. A hard and tyrannical treatment of children not only irritates their temper, but it forms them frequently for exercising tyranny on others afterwards. This is too visible on the continent, where many in their sphere, from the prince and his subordinate tyrants down to the father of a family, and the master of a school, will play, if they can, the despot, and talk in a dictatorial and a decisive way, without regarding reason and arguments. This is not the case in England. The king cannot act in an arbitrary manner, and much less his ministers. The nobility, the gentry, and they who are proud on account of their riches, know very well, that those whom they look upon as their inferiors, are notwithstanding as free as themselves. The clergy of the established church must conform to the act of toleration, and persecutions cannot be carried on as in former times. Parents, particularly the mothers, behave, in common, very tenderly towards their children, and provocations to irritate their temper, are not

not frequent. Yet when I speak of an indulgent education as much prevalent in England, and that it has an influence on the command of temper, I do by no means make this a general assertion. There are exceptions to both. Hot-headed people are often enough to be met with; and even among the members of the British senate. Foreigners, some of whom call the English the wild nation of Europe, will frequently ascribe this pretended wildness to their mode of education; but I have, in more instances than one, made this observation, that many a young Englishman, with all his apparent wildness and uncouthness, when he arrives at the age of twenty-five, becomes more sedate, and conducts himself with a propriety and freedom, not frequently to be met with among young people of the same age, among other nations. He mostly hits the proper medium between the empty complaisance and over-acted vivacity of a Frenchman, and that stiff and formal conduct, which betrays many of my countrymen, though they think themselves people of education. Even a sensible foreigner, who has resided some years in England, will be struck with the contrast, between an Englishman and a lately arrived stranger. Should a more refined education, which be-  
gins

gins to make progress in England, overcome that kind of wildness of which I have been speaking, and which is so natural to those who feel themselves to be freeborn men, it may then happen, that the spirit of liberty, which hitherto characterises the English, may become weaker; for it requires a kind of ferocity, though not barbarity, for a people to maintain their liberty.

The little coercion which is used in English education, appears to me to be one of the principal causes, why a free way of thinking and acting, joined to what the French call *bon sens*, or good common sense, is more conspicuous among the generality of the English than among other nations. Parents and teachers can bear contradiction from the young, and, as I remarked before, it is not so common to talk in a decisive tone as it is abroad. The various opinions, which are entertained in religious and political matters; the many different sects in religion, and the parties in state, originate, in some respects, from the little restraint to the freedom of thinking of children during their education. Hence, however, it does not follow, that all the English have properly reflected, and thought justly; or that this island, according to the expression of baron Bielfeld, is a country of philosophers.

phers. The want of true philosophy, indeed, is sometimes very visible. There are in the colleges of the English universities learned and liberal minded men, but there are arch-pedants also; the church can boast of enlightened divines, fully actuated by principles of toleration, but arch-orthodox men are frequently to be met with, as well as arch-enthusiasts among all other sects. There are zealous Tories, well-wishers and promoters of arbitrary power, as well as patriotic defenders of liberty. But, though in some instances bodily infirmities are the cause, of such deviations from good sense, yet I think the errors of education are still more frequently the source of them.

After these general remarks, I shall endeavour to enquire more minutely into the character of the English. The vestiges of the manners of the old Romans and Saxons, are among the modern inhabitants of this island, by no means totally effaced. The constitution, and that liberty which it has for its foundation, as I have already observed in another place, is derived from the ancient Germans. Our ancestors, whom we style barbarians, understood the rights of mankind better than their more enlightened posterity! The Danes rendered themselves



too odious in England, for many of their customs to have been adopted. When I compare the Roman history and that of England, I am often surprized at their similitude in many respects; and I cannot help wishing, that the character of the modern English did not so much resemble that of the Romans during the triumvirates. It has been remarked by many, that it seems as if the former had inherited their love for plays, public exhibitions, entertainments or *spectacula*, from the latter. The present exhibitions of this kind, are divested of that cruelty which disgraced those of the Romans, notwithstanding the presence of female spectators, who beheld barbarities, and murders, in cold blood; but the boxing matches in England, the bull-baitings, the cock-fightings, and the numerous attendance of both sexes, at public executions, indicate that there is at least a remnant of Roman manners, and of the taste of those times, still left in England. All nations on the globe find their pleasure in public shews and entertainments, according to the taste of their different countries; but I believe that the English are more fond of them than any other people. Whoever will only go to those places where they are exhibited,

ed, may easily convince himself of the truth of what I have said. And as the high minded plebeian Romans of old, thought themselves above their superiors, when they gave their votes, either freely, from patriotism, or through bribery, or guided by party-spirit, to those who solicited them for the consulate, or other dignities in the republic; so an Englishman thinks himself great, when on parliamentary or other elections he can either from his own accord, or seduced by bribery, flattery, persuasion, or party-spirit, give his vote. What Lucan says<sup>5</sup> of the Romans, who sold annually their liberty, at the elections of consuls, is somewhat applicable to the English, at their septennial elections; and on reading a description of electioneering, given by Seneca<sup>6</sup>, it brings always to my mind similar transactions that I have seen in England. The picture which is drawn by Juvenal of ancient Rome; in his third satire, resembles London more than any other great city that I have seen.

<sup>5</sup> Hinc rapti pretio fasces, sectorque favoris  
Ipse sui populus; letalisque ambitus urbi;  
Annua venali referens certamina campo.

De Bello Civili, lib. i. v. 178.

<sup>6</sup> Epist. ad Lucil. 118. Quam putas-esse jucundum, tribus vocatis; &c.

There

There are certain features in the character of the English, that are thought to be remarkable and striking, which I shall now relate. One of the first, which may be looked upon as general, is a national pride. All nations love their respective countries; but the English, I believe, shew it in the highest, and the Germans, perhaps, in the lowest degree. I should point out the Swiss, as those who entertain the greatest affection for their mountainous soil, if I had not met with some of them, who preferred England, nay even came back to it, when they had left it before, with a resolution to end their days in their native country. The great preference which an Englishman gives to his island is, in my opinion, owing to the education he has received, so different from that in other countries; to the diet and manners he is used to, peculiar to his native soil; and above all, because he is told from his infancy, that England is superior to all other countries, and that none are comparable to it. An inhabitant of Chili or Lapland, of which we have proofs, will, without knowing better, be as much attached to the land of his nativity, as an Englishman to his; and I reckon this attachment among those blessings of the Creator, which are but little known, and therefore so little valued. A young Esqui-

man, who was educated from his tenth year at an English fort in Hudson's-bay, and always used to the English way of living, took, at the age of twenty, when they were filling casks with train-oil, an opportunity, when he was alone, and as he thought unobserved, to drink very heartily of this nauseous liquid, turning his face towards the region he came from, and calling out afterwards very emphatically: O how happy is that country, where they enjoy such delicious drink! This, indeed, is by no means surprising to him who has made mankind his study; no more than the fact, so well authenticated, of a Hottentot who returned from Holland to the Cape of Good-hope<sup>7</sup>.

The predilection of the English for their own country, and their high opinion of it, is not of a very modern date, but was recorded centuries ago, as the following anecdote will prove: Don Louis, count of Claramonte, being created by pope Clement VI. king of the then newly discovered Canaries, which were called the Fortunate Islands; the English ambassador at Rome, thinking these islands could be no

<sup>7</sup> Rousseau relates it from good authority, in his *Origine de l'inégalité parmi les hommes*. Oeuvres de ROUSSEAU, tom. iii. p. 158.

other than the British, was so terrified, that he set off, in great haste, to carry this news over to England. I cannot, however, in justice to Englishmen, particularly when they are abroad, avoid observing, that, if they are, even but tolerably well bred, they will not betray so much pride on account of their own persons, as they will because they were born Britons. This is just the reverse of my own countrymen, who generally value their own dear selves most, and pride themselves on it, without regarding their country, or the honour which, perhaps, they might derive from it. A sensible Englishman speaks of himself, his rank, and his dignity, with modesty; but he talks of his country with pride, and a kind of enthusiasm; whilst, on the contrary, a German fine gentleman seems to be only enamoured with his person, his rank, his pretended merits, and his titles, not caring any thing for his nation or his country. How sincerely do I, in this instance, wish, that my countrymen were possessed of a little more patriotism!

From this high opinion which the English entertain of their country, and of their nation, it may be explained, why they adhere so much to their old customs, and to certain habits; perhaps, for no other reason, but because they have been told, from their infancy, that nothing

is so good and so perfect as Old England. Hence many think their constitution, and their government, which, notwithstanding all its pre-eminence and merits, has visible defects, the most perfect of all governments, and above all improvement. Hence the bulk of the people are fully persuaded, that nothing is so delicious and so excellent, as an enormous piece of beef, half roasted, and a plum-pudding of ten pounds weight. Hence an Englishman, will, during the severest weather, rather shiver at the side of a chimney, which consumes a deal of coals, produces clouds of ashes, and blackens the room, than make use of the better sort of stoves, or ovens, which we use in our country<sup>8</sup>: for his ancestors styled a fire a sort of company; they spoiled their eyes by looking thoughtfully at it; and he must do the same. I could mention many more things of this kind, which are transmitted from generation to gene-

<sup>8</sup> Lady Wortley Montague, when she had resided a little while in Germany, found our stoves extremely convenient, and wrote thus to one of her acquaintance in London: "This reflection leads me to consider our obstinacy in shaking with cold, five months in the year, rather than making use of stoves, which are certainly one of the greatest conveniencies of life. . . . If ever I return, in defiance of fashion, you shall certainly see one in my chamber." Vol. i. Letter xix. p. 90.

ration, and have, thereby, acquired such an authority, that a foreigner, who, guided merely by good sense, is surprized at it, will be regarded in much the same light as an heretic would by a stickler for orthodoxy. In regard, however, to changes of ministers of state, and of fashions in dress and furniture, the English are variable enough.

From the high opinion which they entertain of themselves, it may easily be supposed, that they look upon foreigners as much inferior. This fault in their national character, was visible many centuries ago. I have quoted before a passage of Horace, which has a reference to it, and I could relate a number of instances, that have happened within my own time and experience, to confirm this remark, to which so many foreigners, who frequent England, are witnesses. When I, more than twenty years ago, was, for the first time, at Oxford, much kindness and civility were shewn to me by several gentlemen of the university; but I was given to understand, that I was a foreigner; and a very worthy and learned professor, since deceased, who did me the honour to invite me, during my stay at Oxford, to his house, paid me once, after an agreeable conversation of several hours, the fol-

### 374 ON THE CHARACTER

lowing compliment : “ Sir, you look and think  
 “ like an Englishman ; it is a pity you were not  
 “ born in our country.” Though this was said,  
 with great kindness and good intention, yet, it  
 convinced me, that learning and good nature  
 do not wholly remove the influence of early im-  
 bibed national prejudices. It is, likewise, ra-  
 ther curious, that the English, who pride them-  
 selves on the name of Britons, which they bear  
 in common with the Scotch, are, notwithstand-  
 ing, rather more averse to them, than even to  
 a foreigner<sup>d</sup>; nor do the Irish seem to be much  
 more in favour ; for an Irish bog-trotter or an  
 Irish fortune-hunter, are very common expres-  
 sions in England ; and they are not seldom ridi-  
 culed in the public prints, and on the stage ;  
 nay, even among the English themselves, a  
 kind of reserve is visible, for the Episcopalians  
 look upon the Dissenters in an inferior light and

<sup>d</sup> The Scots, who generally are successful when they come  
 into England, because they keep together, and assist one an-  
 other, ascribe the dislike the English have to them, to na-  
 tional pride ; and a Scotch clergyman, expressed himself, not  
 long ago, in the following manner : “ Our good neighbours  
 “ have been always pretty remarkable for the modest virtue  
 “ of self-applause, and considering their own country, at all  
 “ times, and in all things, the standard of perfection ” *Re-  
 marks on Dr. Sam. Johnson’s Journey to the Hebrides*, by the  
 rev. Donald McNicol. London 1780,

the



the different sects keep at a distance from each other.

The French used to be the great object of English national dislike and jealousy; but this seems now to be greatly abated, especially since the late revolution in France has given the English rather a more respectful opinion of the French nation. When I first came to London the appellation of French dog was a compliment, paid by the populace in every street, to a stranger not dressed in the English manner; but at present French customs and fashions are introduced and by some eagerly adopted. Plays either translated, or taken in part from the French, are also very common, and generally well received. The lower class of the people in London, are indeed, within these twenty years, much civilized and altered for the better; though I have reason to believe, that even an English beggar, at the sight of a well-dressed Frenchman or any other stranger, still thinks himself superior, and says within himself, I am glad that I am not a foreigner. There are many Englishmen, who by travelling abroad have greatly laid aside these prejudices; but there are numbers who visit the continent and different countries, and do not return with more liberal opinions than

## 376 ON THE CHARACTER

they carried with them when they left home. The reason is, because they are frequently averse to the company of the natives of the country ; they despise or neglect learning foreign languages, and when they are in numbers, they keep together, live in their own way, and ridicule the manners of the people with whom they should endeavour to get acquainted, that they might judge of them according to truth and justice. It is no wonder, therefore, that, after having spent even years abroad, they should return exactly as they went, if not worse ; and instead of having divested themselves of prejudices, and increased their knowledge, should rather have confirmed the former, and entirely neglected the latter. The late lord Chesterfield, who was perfectly well acquainted with this subject, expresses himself in a much stronger manner than I have done : “ They set out upon  
“ their travels,” he says “ unlicked cubs, and  
“ in their travels they only lick one another ; for  
“ they seldom go into other company. They  
“ know nothing but the English world, and the  
“ worst part of that too, and generally very little of any but the English language ; and they  
“ come home, at three or four and twenty, refined and polished (as is said in one of Congreve’s plays) like Dutch skippers from a  
“ whale-

“whale-fishing”<sup>10</sup>.” He, therefore, desires his son to form no connections with them, because he will get little knowledge, no languages, and no manners among them<sup>1</sup>. That distance which Englishmen are too apt to keep in regard to foreigners, he wishes his son not to adopt, but rather to familiarize himself with them: “Domesticate yourself,” he says, “at Naples, “and lay aside the English *coldness* and *formality*.” I own, I myself have seen Englishmen in Germany, in Switzerland, in France, and in the Netherlands, who came exactly under the description of lord Chesterfield; but, I will add, in justice, that I have met with some, though not a great number, who did honour to themselves and to their country, by their affability, their unaffected but polite manners, their knowledge of foreign languages, their prudent conduct, far from haughtiness and national conceit, and by the inquisitive spirit which they shewed, as sensible and observing travellers; but, as I have said, such as are of this character are somewhat scarce. As for those of the opposite description, it is a pity that they ever should spend so much money abroad as

<sup>10</sup> Letters to his Son, vol. iv. p. 18. Let. 264.

<sup>1</sup> Vol. ii. p. 161. Let. 150.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. iii. p. 2. Let. 189.

they

they generally do. They squander it away; and, suffering themselves to be shamefully imposed upon, they are flattered, and treated with great civility, which they oftentimes mistake for a tribute to their personal merits, though in reality it is not so intended. When they afterwards return home, it is not to be expected, that they should give a just account to their untravellered countrymen, of the countries and the people which they have seen. They will rather state the respect with which they have been treated, and the high estimation in which Englishmen are held by foreigners, together with the cheapness of living abroad, though they have found it sufficiently expensive; and, by ridiculing or laughing at what they have seen, they will rather increase the English contempt for foreigners, and feed the national pride, than be the means of lessening either.

It is no wonder, considering the dislike and the reserve which the generality of the English manifest to foreigners, both on their own island, and when they are on the continent, that in return, most foreign nations are far from wishing them well, and seem to rejoice at their misfortunes, thinking it will humble their pride, at which they are offended. I have found this in many instances, and it was eminently

nently visible during the late war, which has cost England so much blood and treasure. All European countries sided with the Americans, and were pleased to hear of the disasters which befel the English; not from political principles and connections with, or predilection for the former, but from dislike to the latter. It is much to be regretted, that a nation like the British, which in so many views deserves the respect, nay, I will say the admiration, of those by which it is surrounded, should not endeavour to look into its own prejudices, and humour in some degree those by which others are infected, and that the English should not lay aside that indifference, or rather contempt, which they so readily shew for manners, customs, and sentiments, which are different from those of their own country; though it may sometimes happen that they despise what is preferable to their own, and worthy of being adopted. If education, which I have been speaking of before, is, in some respects, one of the causes of this blemish in the English character, there are, at the same time, others, which contribute towards it also. They are islanders, who always are supposed to have something peculiar from the inhabitants of a continent. William the Conqueror provided for his Normans, which  
he

he brought over, very amply at the expence of the English, who certainly could not be pleased to see many of their lands, and their lucrative places in church and state, given to foreigners; forgetting very naturally, by length of time, that they themselves, as Anglo-Saxons, had driven away the Britons before. The best and the highest places, when England was subject to the see of Rome, were frequently given to foreigners; and in the time of king Henry VIII. no less than 15,000 Flemings were resident in London, who had engrossed almost all trade and commerce, to the detriment of the natives. Is it a wonder then, that the English took a dislike to foreigners, and that its effects should still be visible, though the causes have ceased? Monarchs, who in modern times ascended the British throne, would also naturally have given the preference to their own countrymen, in many instances, and listened to their solicitations for places of honour and emolument, if English jealousy had not justly prevented it. Yet all this, which, from justice and impartiality, I have mentioned, cannot justify that overbearing national pride, and contempt for other nations, with which numbers are infected. Even some expressions used in English laws, and law-opinions, relative to  
foreign-

foreigners<sup>3</sup>, many of which are of a modern date, seem to imply their degradation; and I believe in all countries, a person who lends money in a legal way upon landed estates, though not a native of the land, would be secure of his property, and under the protection of the law; but in England his security would be very precarious, if he were either not naturalized, or denizified. His freehold security may be disputed, and his money lost, merely because he is an alien, and his property thus lent, not under the protection of a law-court; which, according to generally received opinion, should be open to justice for every one, native or foreigner.

A generous disposition is said to be one of the traits of the English national character; and, I think, very justly. It is likewise true, that they are much inclined to make known their acts of generosity, and to preserve the memory of their good deeds. But supposing this to arise from vanity, or from other causes, it has, nevertheless its advantages. The exertions of humanity and compassion are, among the English, frequently sudden, and very strong.

<sup>3</sup> Perhaps I may be mistaken; but, I own, this thought struck me, on reading Blackstone's Commentaries. Vol. i. ch. x. p. 369, 379, &c. Vol. ii. p. 249, 250.

## 362. ON THE CHARACTER

Great indulgence is shown to faults and human imbecillities, because hypocrisy and arrogant assumption are not so common here, and every body seems to know and to feel what man is. Yet there are despicable characters enough, who laugh at the dictates of humanity, and seem to be destitute of liberal and generous sentiments ; but the majority of the nation are against them, and treat with contempt and detestation, those who appear to be devoid of the feelings of humanity and generosity. The conduct of the English in India, and the poor inhabitants of that country, oppressed, plundered, and even sacrificed to avarice, will never add to their fame for liberal and humane dispositions ; but rather remain as an indelible stain. Many bailiffs, who arrest debtors, many attorneys, many church-wardens, many overseers of the poor, many clergymen, when they collect their tythes and their income, seem to have humanity and generosity no more in the catalogue of their virtues, than the members of the holy inquisition have in theirs ; or the tax-gatherers in Germany, who, by the gracious order of their illustrious superiors, strip the poor subjects of the last mite which they have earned by the sweat of their brow. A modern



## OF THE ENGLISH. 493

modern German writer \* praises the English highly on account of their humane treatment of the brute creation; but, I am apprehensive, that, whoever has been somewhat more acquainted with England, and particularly London, will consider first, before he concurs with him. A few examples are not sufficient to characterize a whole nation. Whoever has seen the driving of the cattle to the London markets, the usage of the poor horses in carts, before post-chaises, and hackney-coaches, the riding of them at horse-races, and on the public roads; whoever has been a spectator at cock-fightings, bull-baitings, and similar exhibitions, will certainly hesitate a long while, before he pronounces encomiums on English generosity towards poor animals.

The liberality of the nation is praised, and very justly. There are instances of the kind, which, on account of their magnitude, and the manner in which they were done, deserve admiration. Subscriptions towards the support of the poor and the necessitous, are no where more common, nor more liberal than in England. Hospitals of every kind, institutions to alleviate human miseries, charity-schools, dispensaries, and such monuments as witness the

\* Alberti, in his Letters, Let. lli. *in German.*

noblest

### 384 ON THE CHARACTER

noblest feelings of humanity, are no where more frequent than here. I am, likewise, of opinion, that, when popery was the religion of the kingdom, the incomes of the monasteries, and other charitable institutions, did not equal, even in those superstitious times, the sums which now, by acts of parliament, or by generous and voluntary contributions, are annually raised for charitable uses : they amount to several millions. Nevertheless, in no country are more poor to be seen than in England, and in no city a greater number of beggars than in London. The fault seems manifestly to be in the disposal of the money collected for the poor, and the regulations made for the maintenance of them. A foreigner, who hears of many millions annually raised for the benefit of the poor ; and, wandering through London and its environs, sees so many hospitals and so many noble buildings, erected by the bountiful contributions of charity, will justly entertain the highest notions of the liberality of the nation ; but, at the same time, he will find himself unable to explain how it happens, that in his walks, he is, almost every hundred yards, disturbed by the lamentations of unfortunate persons, who demand his charity. He should, however, remember, great as the sums are,  
which

which, by authority of acts of parliament, are annually raised for the necessitous poor; and, splendid as the appearance of the hospitals may be, there is still reason to temper his admiration and his readiness to draw inferences from thence, in favour of a boundless charity. A great part of the nation pays the poor-rate reluctantly, and some hospitals, as it is said, owe their existence more to vanity, or even to less commendable motives, than to a true spirit of liberality and generosity. Be this, however, as it may, it redounds, notwithstanding, to the honour of the English, that parliament has made such a provision for the poor, and that hospitals, though they were even an offspring of vanity, are nevertheless, when they once get into existence, supported by a generous public. Several new hospitals have been raised during my residence in London; and, to the honour of the nation I must say, that I have not heard of any charitable institution being given up again for want of due support by the hand of charity. Certain, however, as it is, that England outdoes all other countries in acts of this kind, it ought to be kept in mind, that she is supposed to be richer than they, and that her inhabitants are possessed of a greater share of national ambition than other nations. There

### 386 ON THE CHARACTER

is room for asking the question, Whether they could not do a great deal more? An Englishman is generally very well acquainted with the value of money, and those who are possessed of riches calculate frequently with more anxious œconomy than liberality demands, or even will permit. This virtue, in particular, is not to be sought for among the crowd which is daily to be seen on the Royal-Exchange; there are some worthy men intermixed here and there with the rest, who, with generous hearts, and liberal hands, perform acts for which humanity blesses them; but the majority find neither time nor inclination to follow their example. When many of our Germans pride themselves on pedigrees, drawn up on parchments two or three yards long, an Englishman laughs at their folly, because he knows the value of the things of this world better, and thinks, as the Romans did, in the time of Juvenal, that the money a man is possessed of, fixes his worth and his credit<sup>10</sup>. About a hundred and sixty years ago, according to Mr. Hume<sup>11</sup>, this was not the character of the English, when high pride of family prevailed, and

<sup>10</sup> *Quantum quisque sua nummorum servat in arca,  
Tantum habet et fidei.* Sat. iii. v. 143.

<sup>11</sup> Hist. of England, vol. vi. p. 167.

the nobility and gentry distinguished themselves, by a dignity and stateliness of behaviour, from the common people; when great riches, acquired by commerce, were more rare, and had not yet been able to confound all ranks of men, and render money the chief foundation of distinction.

Those acts of the British government, which foreigners look upon as monuments of the generosity and liberality of the nation, are to be judged of with caution. The money granted by a majority of the house of commons, from whatever motives or influence, always comes out of the pockets of the people; and if it once happens, that ten thousand pounds are granted to purposes which do honour to the nation, a hundred thousand are, perhaps, voted immediately after, which cannot be placed either to the account of national reputation, or to that of the good of the public. I have before observed, that the two hospitals at Greenwich and at Chelsea, are generally the first and principal objects, which strike a foreigner with high notions of a liberal and generous way of thinking. They, indeed, raise the attention on account of their grandeur; but I have already made some remarks on this outward appearance, which is common to almost all Eng-

lish charitable institutions, and which rather prevents their being so extensively useful as they might be. It may be observed, that the British armies, in war-time, together with their auxiliaries, amount sometimes to almost a hundred thousand men, and the navy, perhaps, requires almost as many; and it should also be remembered, that the hospitals at Greenwich contains only about two thousand invalids, and that of Chelsea, perhaps, six hundred. This certainly will lessen the admiration of these two structures, generally regarded as the most magnificent monuments ever erected by a generous national spirit. It is very true, that besides those who are maintained within these hospitals, a number of invalids, particularly after a war, to the amount of several thousands, are supported as out-pensioners, either from the revenues of the hospital, or from those sums which are granted by parliament to make up the deficiencies; but the sum which the poor maimed and crippled invalids receive as out-pensioners is, in fact, but a trifle; for it amounts annually to little more than eight pounds. Indeed, those who are styled the great on earth, and who are so ready to expose the lives of the poor and the ignorant, to serve their ambition or their other purposes, may easily hold out such a small allure-  
ment

lurement as hospitals are, where an old decrepid warrior, who remains after the many who were killed or died of their wounds, may conclude his wretched days in peace. Notwithstanding these provisions are made, a stranger will be surpris'd to see many poor crippled sailors, in the streets of London, who go about begging, or sing ballads to excite compassion. These people, however, when they are not impostors, but real sailors, have not served in king's ships, but chiefly on board privateers; and, therefore, cannot, by right, claim the benefit of the national hospitals for invalids. Yet as the letters of marque are made out, and given under the authority of government, it might be asked, why those who fit out privateers, to enrich themselves by robbing, are not obliged by government, or by act of parliament, to pay so much out of their plunder, as might be required to erect and support hospitals for those who are maimed and disabled in their service? The sight, and the miserable situation of these poor people in the street, during or soon after a war, certainly does not increase the high notions which foreigners generally entertain of British generosity and liberality, when they first arrive in England.

Sincerity and honesty are reckoned to be another trait in the English character; and I can confirm the truth of it from my own experience. Very few assertions are so general as not to be liable to many exceptions; and, therefore, numbers of impostors, and bad people are to be found in England as well as in other countries; but it is, nevertheless certain, that the bulk of the nation is good and honest, and not given to deceit. I may say, that of this the very spirit of the British constitution and laws is a proof. The riches and dignities which a person may be possessed of, will avail but very little in a court of justice, even if the plaintiff were a poor man; on the contrary, a good private character of a person accused, will be of great service, if the case is in the least doubtful. No people, I believe, shew, as it seems from a natural disposition, more lenity and indulgence to those who are guilty of human failings, or have committed transgressions, than the English. There is none that treats the unfortunate with more compassion, and regulates its conduct towards them more according to the saying of Seneca, that the unfortunate are sacred objects \*. There are some reigns, recorded in English history, wherein deeds of despotism, and transactions against the constitu-

\* *Res sacra miser est,*



tion and the laws, seem to darken this trait of the national character; but it is evident, that the bulk of the nation has always detested such a way of acting, and has, if possible, inflicted such punishments on the miscreants as they deserved. It would, therefore, be wrong to judge by the conduct of particular persons; or from the wicked disposition and the ambitious views of bad ministers, at the head of the administration, or from modern transactions in the East-Indies, of the majority of the people. How many anecdotes of honesty, equity, and disinterestedness might be quoted from private life. Even the manners of true Englishmen, and their conversation, mark their sincerity and upright intentions. They are not so full of words, of compliments, and protestations of friendship towards a stranger, as is common among some other nations; but they are by no means rude, uncivil, or like the character of a John Bull, as it is absurdly represented abroad and on the French stage. The reserved and grave behaviour, which they manifest at the commencement of a new acquaintance, may rather serve as a pledge of their sincerity to him, who has afterwards obtained their confidence, and convince him, that their subsequent more open and more cordial way of conversing, does not arise from hypocrisy, but

from fincetity of heart. There are in England, as I have before observed, numbers of hypocrites, of impostors, of villains, sharpers, thieves, and house-breakers; but, nevertheless, the generality of the nation is good and honest, and yields in this respect to no nation whatever; nay, I am almost inclined to say, it is superior to any. Those who mistrust or envy one another in trade or in their different professions, are here out of the question; for, though many honest men, together with such who are not so, may be seen on the Royal-Exchange, the merchant and the tradesman, will, almost always, shrug up his shoulders, and very significantly say: "There are very few honest people to be found; very few that can be trusted." These are opinions and decisions too much influenced by interest, and by ideas, acquired by means of the business which a person is daily transacting, and the occupations which are become habitual to him. An unprejudiced observer will draw the national character of a people from the generality, not from the dregs of a metropolis, and not from those few who move, as it were mechanically, in the narrow circle of their professions.

Frankness and freedom are likewise a characteristic of English manners. In many countries

tries even thoughts are not free ; and a person suspected of heresy, either in matters of state or religion, cannot always avoid persecution. In England, thank heavens ! not only thoughts, but even the tongue, the pen, and the press, are free. An Englishman has no reason to be an hypocrite ; he may speak as he thinks, and act as it appears to him to be just and proper. Since neither education, nor laws and constitution, form him for a slave ; he exhibits himself as a free man, partly from habit, and partly because he has no reason to be afraid, so long as he conforms to the laws of his country. The number of newspapers, which are printed daily, and the freedom which is so predominant in them, shew the character of the nation, in this respect, in a striking light. I will, by no means, be a defender of the abuse of the freedom of the press ; I disapprove of its being made a vehicle of calumny, or of productions calculated to mislead and to pervert good principles ; but, after many years observation, I am confident, that the advantage of the liberty of the press greatly out-weighs the abuses to which it is sometimes liable. The whole public is here made the tribunal, at whose bar judgment is given ; every man is heard, and every one is free, to justify his conduct, or clear his character. If  
in

in all countries such heralds were to be found, whose loud and dread voice could awaken shame and fear ; were the common people every where as eager to read public papers, conducted in the manner as in England, tyranny and insolence, superstition and oppression, would soon be banished by the majority of voices ; and people who could read, and had learnt to express their thoughts in writing, would soon cease to be slaves. With how much frankness does a patriot speak in parliament, or publish his sentiments on national affairs, as a sensible spectator, by means of the press. People who are only used to write edicts, and arbitrary proclamations, by order of their despotical princes ; and those who, as pretended politicians, regard them with a mysterious air, will, perhaps, on reading this, shake their heads : but it proves only, with what superiority an Englishman thinks, when compared to such creeping mortals, and that he knows the natural rights of men better, and how to maintain them with dignity. There are, indeed, in England, people enough, whose subsistence, ostentation, and outward splendor, depend on the mercy of their superiours, and their sometimes arbitrary masters ; who, therefore, talk the language of simulation and hypocrisy, when they appear before their deities,

But

But the greater part of the nation is not in such a situation, and they consequently speak out, and open their minds freely, on all kinds of subjects of conversation. Even Deists, Socinians, Baptists, Quakers, and numbers of other sects, profess their tenets and opinions as freely as the most orthodox episcopalian, or the most rigid puritan; and no party blames the other for this freedom. How singular must this appear to foreign zealots, who, without the least knowledge of the world, stare at every thing, through spectacles furnished and applied by prejudices!

Courage marks the English character, and though they have this in common with other nations, yet I think that they maintain a kind of superiority in being the least fearful of death. Battles fought by the English, by sea and land, afford sufficient proof of this assertion; and, perhaps, they would be more numerous, if naval and military promotions were not bought, or obtained by interest, but bestowed according to merit. Among those who suffer for capital crimes, many examples of contempt of death are to be met with. The old and the infirm, when they see dissolution almost before their eyes, will talk of it with the greatest composure, as if they possessed a soul like that described

scribed by Juvenal, which, far from being terrified by death, reckons the moment of its dissolution among the gifts of heaven<sup>3</sup>.

I will here insert a few words on suicide, which is so common in this country. Whether it may be considered as a proof of courage, I will not now discuss. In my opinion self-murder is always an act highly unnatural, and men who do not live in a state of civil society, will never be guilty of it. Various causes have been assigned, to account for this propensity of the English to suicide. Sometimes the blame is laid upon the climate, sometimes upon the melancholy disposition peculiar to them, and sometimes upon their eating too much animal food, besides an hundred other reasons. But I believe it to be a natural consequence of that education which prevails in this country, and of which I have said so much before. The passions are in youth little controuled, much less subdued; and when, in years of more maturity, they cannot be gratified in their vehemence, they will sometimes produce that fatal resolution to finish a disagreeable life, by violent means; which, in a hundred instances, is more easily taken, be-

<sup>3</sup> . . . . . Animum mortis terrore carentem.

Qui spatium vitæ extremum inter munera ponat

Naturæ.

Sat. x. v. 357.

cause

cause religion, that support of the unhappy in adversity, is too often totally neglected. The Quakers in England, are a plain proof of the truth of the opinion here advanced; for they have the same climate and diet as the rest of the English, and yet suicide is unheard of among them, or at least extremely seldom. The reason of this must undoubtedly be looked for in the difference of the education which the Quakers receive, when compared with that of the rest of the English. The passions and obstinacy of the children of the former are broken very early, though not by violent means; for a Quaker denies, with a firm composure, satisfying the impetuous desires of his children; and gains, by these means, infinitely over them. He thereby promotes his own ease of mind and tranquillity as well as theirs; he accustoms them, without knowing the name of philosophy, to act in time like philosophers, by fulfilling the duties of society, and bearing with fortitude the adversities of life. Whoever is educated in this manner, and has learned to conquer himself, will never, either from despair, or from disappointments in life and adversity, shorten his days by his own hands. Others on the contrary, who place the enjoyment of life in gratifying their passions, which at a very early

## 398 ON THE CHARACTER

age is generally the case with Englishmen, will at last be slaves to the violence and power of their desires. Disappointments in life, the weakness and infirmities of an advancing age, increasing impatience and confirmed ill-humour, excite now and then the unhappy thought of getting rid of these evils by shortening the duration of life. There are people who make away with themselves from reasons of a religious melancholy; others, whose nervous system is so irritable, that the least sensation of offended ambition, or a shame carried too far on account of moral transgressions, and fear of losing credit and character, induces them to lay violent hands on themselves. But even here, if we examine the causes of suicide, we shall find, that they arise from too far stretched notions of honour, which are imbibed from the present state of society; from some absurd ideas in regard to religion, relative to the present state and that of futurity, which were instilled into the mind by modes of education, and connexions in life formed afterwards. Poverty, arising from the dearness of living, and numberless taxes in England, I have frequently found to induce the unfortunate to suicide. If these moral causes, in conjunction with thick blood, and a tender nervous system,

too



too frequently to be met with among the English, begin to operate, suicide may be accounted for, without giving such ridiculous reasons for it as some French writers have done. They ascribe the propensity of the English to destroy themselves, to ambition and the love of singularity; to a desire of the honour of furnishing a newspaper paragraph after their death, relating their making away with themselves<sup>4</sup>; and some have thought that auricular confession, which in the Romish church is used, would ease the minds of the people, who are in a melancholy and desponding way, or who labour under anxieties, and thus prevent them from putting an end to their existence. During my stay in England, many persons of quality, and numbers of lower extraction, both rich and poor, have made away with themselves; and their history, particularly that part of their leaving

<sup>4</sup> The author of the French book, *Londres*, tom. i. p. 398. gives this reason among others; nay, he adds, that the borders of the Thames were built to the edge with houses, and the balustrades of the bridges raised so high, from no other motives, but that the melancholy English might have fewer opportunities to jump into the river, and drown themselves. If Mr. Grosley, the author, had never been in London, he might be forgiven for writing in this manner; but having seen himself the river, and the bridges, it is rather unaccountable.

## 400 ON THE CHARACTER

this world, would confirm all that I have said on this subject.

It is a laudable custom in England, that nobody is interred, before proper enquiry is made about the death, whether it was natural or unnatural. In case of suicide, the coroner's inquest sits on the body, to decide the question, whether the person who committed it, was, at the time when the deed was performed, insane, or not ? Generally the verdict given, is in favour of the former, and the act committed charged to lunacy ; though it is, perhaps, in nine instances out of ten, very well known, that the deceased was in full possession of his senses, and knew very well what he was about when he destroyed himself. Should the coroner's inquest bring in a verdict of *felo de se*, the goods and chattels of the deceased are forfeited to the king, and the body receives, as it is called, an ignominious burial in the highway, and a stake is to be driven through the heart. This, however, is very seldom done ; and whenever it takes place, such a strange kind of punishment falls upon very poor people ; the relations of a person in good circumstances, who has committed self-murder, knowing how to avoid an unfavourable verdict. It is rather surprising that a law, ordering such an inconsistent punishment,

ment, was ever made, or that, since it exists, it is not, in these more enlightened times, abolished. The English laws suffer a man who was executed on the gallows, for murder and robberies, to be buried in a church-yard, or even in a church itself, with the usual funeral pomp; and why should an unfortunate person, who voluntarily finished his days, under a load of miseries and troubles, which he thought unsupportable, not meet with the same indulgence? The number of those who make away with themselves in London, annually, is considerable; and if this sort of punishment were to take place, where, according to law, it should, there would be no end of such exhibitions. It is besides against reason, to attempt the punishment of a dead body; and were it to be done, as is said, to deter others from committing suicide, it would, in my opinion, have but little effect: for those who take the resolution to renounce life, and voluntarily put a stop to its farther enjoyment, will certainly little regard in what manner their senseless body is treated, when they have done for ever with this world. As to the effect, which a law made against self-murder, had upon the Milesian maidens<sup>s</sup>,

<sup>s</sup> A. Gellius, in Noct. Attic. lib. xv. c. 10.

## 402 ON THE CHARACTER

this would afford ground for many observations.

It is said of the inhabitants of England, that they are much addicted to melancholy and gloominess, and I believe there is some truth in this. They seem, however, to be friends to pleasure, though every one creates his own, according to his fancy and his whims. They have a proverb, "A short life and a merry one;" which many, to their detriment, put into practice. No people on earth have, upon the whole, more reason to be satisfied with their lot than the English; but, *fortunatos si sua bona norint!* thousands of them do not know it, or are not inclined to believe it. Many ramble over the whole globe in pursuit of happiness and ease of mind; but they are soon convinced, when they are remote from their own island, that they had better have staid at home, to enjoy there what they in vain sought for in foreign countries. I have seen, however, many English, who are really happy, and seem to be conscious of it; but their number, I presume, is not very great. Most of the inhabitants of this island might be contented mortals, if they were not too extravagant in their desires, and too indulgent in gratifying their passions, which too often have acquired a complete ascendancy over reason. It  
is

is said of the English, that they have great predilection for tragedy, and that they prefer the softer feelings of humanity, and the tear of compassion, to the laughter of the comic Muse, when she exposes the follies of life; and that, from thence, it is clear, that they are no friends to mirth. I have my doubts about this pretended preference given to tragedy, and it is certainly not the case at present. The inferior class of people, in the upper-gallery of the play-house, laugh as loud at the silly pranks of Harlequin, who is not yet banished from the English stage, as ever our German populace can do, at similar exhibitions. The intelligent spectator yawns as little over the lively representations, which the comic Muse, accompanied by satire, gives of the ridiculous follies of the higher and lower classes of people, of clergy and laity. So far are the English from denying themselves a hearty laugh, or regarding the declamations of the late lord Chesterfield, against loud laughing, that even the house of commons will sometimes shake with peals of laughter. There are likewise numbers of people, among both sexes, who are exceedingly fond of trifles, and make them their greatest amusements. Whoever wants to see the French saying, *Que les Anglois ont peu de goût pour la ba-*

*gabelle*, refuted, let him only cast his eyes upon the thousands of fine gentlemen, as they call themselves, who are to be seen in the streets of London; upon the continual changes of fashion, particularly among the female sex; upon the ostentatious display of gaudy equipages; and he will soon convince himself, that these Britons so celebrated for seriousness and gravity, do not yield to any of their neighbours, in the south or in the east, as to taste for levities and trifles. The English have greatly changed within this century; they are grown more gay, and for that very reason more civil and polished in their manners. It, therefore, cannot be said, as I have frequently heard abroad, that their blood, by nature, is blacker and thicker than that of other nations. If we consider, that clear and sun-shine days, have a great influence upon the serenity of the mind, it is no wonder that an Englishman should look more chearful in May than in November; though even in this month there is, at least in London, no want of a display of gaiety. A smart Parisian marquis, when he came to Naples, was so full of animal spirits that the people thought him mad. He skipped about with such amazing elasticity, that the Italians swore he had got springs in his shoes; but, when the

firocc

sirocco wind had blown a few days, without intermission, he walked with the step of a philosopher, complained of being low-spirited to an extreme, and swore he should hang himself, if that execrable wind continued to blow two days longer<sup>6</sup>: why then is it surprising, that an Englishman should discover the effects which the cold damps and fogs, that cover his island during the winter months, produce upon his mind and body. In some English companies as much cheerfulness and hilarity may be seen as in those of any other nation; and, to my great satisfaction, I have found, that they are more free from stiff formality, low wit, and that spirit of disputation and wrangling, which in companies of other countries too much prevails. In societies of inferior classes, and their conversations, more good sense properly expressed, may sometimes be heard, than in those among people in other countries, who think themselves of no small consequence.

It now and then happens in English companies, that after much conversation and pleasantry, a sudden pause is made for some minutes, during which they look at one another with serious attention. They know that this is peculiar to them, and

<sup>6</sup> BRYDONE'S Tour through Sicily and Malta, vol. i. p. 7, 8.

## 406 ON THE CHARACTER

call therefore this short silence, an *English conversation*. While they wonder at the formality, which so much distinguishes strangers, coming from northern countries, they are not less surprized at the noisy and frivolous chat of the French. Grotius, even a Dutchman, whose reputation, before he visited England, about the year 1613, was very high, lost a great deal of it, because he talked more than the English thought proper. In a letter written by Abbot, archbishop of Canterbury, to sir Ralph Winwood, he is spoken of as tedious in conversation and full of tittle-tattle; and it is added, in the same letter, as the opinion of king James I. of him, that he was a "pedant, full of words, and of no great judgment?" His majesty, however, seems not to have been aware, that he was more than suspected to be very much of a pedant himself.

An Englishman, in conversation, is far from being so lively, noisy, and insinuating as some other nations are; yet, I think his behaviour is, in the eye of reason and good sense, the most to be approved, and the most pleasing. If he talks but little, he will often say more to the purpose in ten words than others in an hundred. If he assures me, with a

<sup>7</sup> Biographia Britannica, art. *Abbot*, note [L].



few words, and a squeeze by the hand, that he is my friend, I may rely on this simple assurance more than on twenty protestations, and numberless unmeaning compliments. An Englishman, when he comes to some maturity of years, and has received a tolerably good education, generally has thought more, and acted with more freedom, than is customary among people of the same age, in other countries. He, therefore, is not much addicted to empty talk, or fond of reasoning on things and actions, from false principles and wrong points of view; though, indeed, I must confess, I have heard and seen many who may justly be considered as exceptions. Those, however, who attend to facts and experience, taking proper time for enquiry, will not often speak in a decisive manner; and being not unacquainted with the nature and true state of human things, will exhibit a proper reservedness and seriousness; they will attend to argument, and dislike idle dispute. It is, therefore, not surprising, that persons, who, during their whole life-time, have not much thought, or made much observation themselves, but, on the contrary, have, without enquiry, adopted and eagerly defended the opinions of others, should find an Englishman reserved in conversation, cool and gloomy in

friendship, and silent in company. Towards true friends, he is open-hearted, cheerful, obliging, and will discover his sentiments, whenever he thinks it necessary, with the utmost freedom.

It is said of the English, that they think for themselves, and I believe, nobody, who is acquainted with them, will dispute this. There are, indeed, people enough here too, who let others think instead of themselves; but they are, comparatively speaking, not so numerous as in other nations. Some, no doubt, follow implicitly the maxims of the court, and adopt its creed without examination, because they live by court-favour; but, I am persuaded, that but few of them are either so ignorant, or so obstinate, as to believe, that the manner in which they talk and act is just and right, unless they have been educated in the most rigid Tory principles. The common plain man thinks, and reasons frequently, on things relating to moral duties, equity, and those which influence the happiness of life, as justly as some in other countries, who, on account of their rank and education, think themselves learned and wise. For this very reason, that prejudice which rests itself on pretended authority, is not so common in England, except it be in matters  
of

of religion, or when a man in his profession, as an artist, or a mechanic, has once, by some means, acquired fame; in which case, even his very indifferent productions will be thought valuable, merely because he has obtained a name. The respect paid to people of rank, or to such who occupy high offices, in church or state, is not carried so far in England as it is elsewhere; every one seems to know, that those, who, on account of their station, or employment in life, wear a rich, or a singular dress, are and remain but men. It excites, therefore, no extraordinary surprize if they commit crimes, and are punished for them according to law. At the execution of such persons, even the mob, which is very numerous, will generally observe a certain decorum towards the criminal, arising from compassion; though there are no military present on such occasions, as in other countries, to keep the populace in awe. This consciousness, which most English people possess, that they are men as well as those who are elevated and distinguished by the institutions of society, prevents that slavish veneration of princes, of dignitaries of the church, of magistrates and others, which is so visible in many countries, and which proves the influence that a despotical government has over  
the

the mind, by means of education. He would be thought a vain fool, indeed, in England, who should exclaim, as is frequently done abroad, when family or titled pride is supposed to be offended : such a rich or great, such an honourable or right-honourable, such a reverend or right-reverend person as I am ! No ; an Englishman, even in high station, knows that his countrymen are free men, and that they have sense to make use of as well as himself. A general, when he returns to his own island, crowned with laurels, does not presume himself to be superior to his fellow-citizens ; and Lord Clive, who had seen Indian princes and nabobs humbling themselves before him, and who had acted in India like an eastern despot, knew, when he came back to his own country, that he was no more than another Englishman ; and though Indian princes had prostrated themselves before him, he was humble among his own countrymen, because he was well aware, that they did not think like East Indians.

Whether active industry be a characteristic of the nation, may be doubted ; in Holland they seem to be more bustling in their trading towns ; but, perhaps, they are so only in appearance. Those who must and who have a mind to work, do it with spirit and assiduity ;  
but

but the majority, I believe, are inclined to live in ease and indolence. No people are more fond of holy-days than their workmen and apprentices. Perhaps, they would sooner admit of despotical laws, than be deprived of their stated seasons for idleness, drunkenness, and debauchery. The streets in London are continually crouded with people, pushing along, and most of them with countenances as serious as if their heads were full of the most weighty affairs. This will strike a foreigner, who has met on the continent many more chearful faces than he will meet with when he perambulates the metropolis, or other places in England, and seeing the streets of London so full, he will be apt to think that most of them are intent upon business; in which, however, he is mistaken; for numbers of those he meets are employed in nothing but idleness. Almost the same may be said of those who are seen on the public roads; all is in motion, and has the appearance of activity and diligence, though many are engaged in no profitable business. Numbers of horsemen pass along, of whom six out of ten are idlers, who ride merely for diversion, and yet go on, without the least necessity, at such a rate, as if they were hastening to see a friend, whom they believed to be at the last gasp, and  
were

were in fear of his expiring before their arrival. The coaches are mostly filled with loungers of both sexes, who to get rid of themselves, and to enjoy the fresh air, look at each other in silence, and have drawn up the glasses for protection against the dust in summer, and the cold in the winter. Even the stage-coaches are continually crouded with passengers, and the female ones make generally the majority, most of whom travel, to be absent from home, to pay some unnecessary visits, and to endeavour to get rid of ill-humour, and to go out of town that they may have an opportunity of returning to it again. In short, there seems to be a great degree of restlessness among the English, though labour is not what pleases many. Those who must work do it in hopes of living at last in indolence, and of enjoying, as it is called, life, though their increased years tell them, that they are too old for it.

To this prevalent inclination to get rich as soon as possible, and to lead an indolent life, I greatly ascribe that spirit of gaming, which is more predominant, and exerts itself more powerfully among the English, than among any other nation. Hence that madness, which takes possession of the London populace, during the time when the annual state-lotteries are drawn,

drawn. Hence the success of those numerous advertisements of lotteries and insurance-offices, though it is well-known, that many of them take advantage of the credulous, and make them repent of their folly in trusting them. Hence the tricks which are daily played, to raise or to lower the public funds. And where is there any people so fond of frequent and oftentimes high betting, not seldom about extreme trifles, as the English? What will you lay? is the first question frequently asked by high and low, when the smallest dispute arises on subjects of little consequence. Some of the richer class, after dinner over a bottle, feel, perhaps, an inclination for betting; the one opens a nut with a maggot in it, another does the same, and a third immediately proposes a bet, which of the two worms will crawl first over a given distance, on the table. Betting now takes place with warmth and spirit, in such a manner that, hundreds, nay, perhaps, thousands of pounds depend on the activity or idleness of two poor maggots! Parallels to this manner of gaming may be met with, in proportion, in all towns and villages over England. This predominant passion of the nation for gaming is likewise remarkable for the preparations, the zeal, and care, with which a wager is carried

#### 414 ON THE CHARACTER

tied on, if it has excited some attention, or is publicly announced. Hundreds of other bets are laid besides, and thousands of pounds depend on the issue of the wager which gave rise to the rest. Nay, the impetuosity of this gaming spirit, will sometimes overcome that humanity and generosity, which, as I have said before, distinguishes the English character. It has been related to me as a fact, that a person fell into the Thames, and among some of the spectators, bets were immediately laid; Whether the unfortunate man would be drowned or not? One was violently for maintaining the first, and laid a bet accordingly, but at seeing that moment a boat setting off to save him, he called out: "Stop! that is not fair, for if that be the case I shall lose my wager." I could mention many other instances of the vehemence of this spirit of gaming, and relate many other anecdotes relative to this subject.

An extreme degree of curiosity, and great credulity, are likewise said to be traits of the English character; and, perhaps, not without foundation. It is very true, that in other countries, enough of a similar nature is to be met with also; but, I believe, it is more striking among the English, because they are, in other respects, remarkable for superiority of good



sense. The abbé Du Bos asserts, that the love of novelty, disquietude, and audacity have, for centuries together, marked the English character. As to the two first qualities, I think, the abbé might with more propriety have fixed them upon his own countrymen; though, I believe, that their love for novelty, their changeableness and inconstancy, arises more from their fickleness, volatility, and vanity, than from an uneasy and discontented mind, which is generally the case with the English. The contentment and happiness of a Frenchman suffers, therefore, little or nothing by such a disposition; but the reverse is the case of an Englishman. That incredible eagerness and consummate credulity, with which the French swallowed the Mississippi plan of Mr. Law, is a sufficient proof, that they, by no means, yield to the English in the love of novelty and incredulity. The story of the Cock-lane ghost, besides many others, and above all, that of the bottle-conjurer, as he is called, are well known on the continent. But, as to this last, I hardly can persuade myself, that any person, whose senses were arrived at maturity, could go and pay money to see a full-grown man creep into a quart bottle through the neck, because he believed it actually to be possible. I am rather inclined

## 416 ON THE CHARACTER

inclined to think, that many went there merely to see how such a daring impostor would be able to extricate himself, from the resentment of the crowd he had drawn together, by publicly announcing such a palpable absurdity; and this I look upon as the best apology which can be made, to lessen the laugh which this story cannot but excite. It is certain, however, that credulity is an ingredient of the national character, and that from thence, as well as from the love of novelty, many events in English history, and many daily occurrences, can only be accounted for. Hence that incredible number of newspapers which are printed and eagerly read. Hence the implicit faith that is given by the generality to the accounts, published in the Gazette in war-time, about battles, sieges, and other military transactions, which are reckoned to be infallibly true. Hence the effects of the false news propagated at the Stock-Exchange, and the success of all the rogueries practised in Exchange-Alley, to impose upon the credulous, by ridiculous news, fabricated there. Hence the most bombastic and most impudent puffs in newspapers and advertisements, which are far more successful than a man of sense could easily be brought to believe. Hence the encouragement which  
quack-

quack-doctors, and their infallible medicines for the cure of all disorders meet with. The English laugh at the invocation of saints, and the confidence and faith which the Romish church places in them ; but, certainly, the invocation of quack-doctors, and the faith given to their nostrums, are equally inexcusable ; and the saints, at least, are harmless, which cannot always be said of the quack and his nostrums. The great number of religious sects, which are in England, and new ones starting up from time to time, is owing in many respects to the love of novelty ; and that the strangest doctrines, which seem to revolt against common sense, find, notwithstanding, people who adopt and attempt to defend them, must be greatly ascribed to an uncommon share of credulity. A foreigner, who passes an open place before Bedlam, called Moorfields, will at first not be able to comprehend what is meant by the crowds, that generally there throng about persons raised from the ground, the one, perhaps, on a kind of pulpit, the other on a scaffolding, till, at last, he finds, after some enquiry, that the one is a charlatan, or a quack-doctor, and the other an enthusiast, or an inspired preacher. He will be surprized to see how the generality of those who listen to such persons, do it

with attention and great patience. Many, indeed, go soon away, and shrug up their shoulders from compassion; and there are only few who either laugh or smile. Some will stay a good while, and say, The man seems very earnest; others, suspending their judgment, will complain that they cannot very well tell what he is about. It is seldom that the populace abuse such people, who thus expose themselves, or break their rostrums, which would soon be the fate of similar exhibitions abroad. Here every one likes novel sights, and wants to hear something new, even if it were nonsense that appeared in the shape of devotion, in open air.

In no country do poverty and old age seem to be considered as greater evils than here. To be young and poor is, perhaps, not so much minded, because there is a possibility of becoming rich; but old age, though accompanied with sufficient fortune, is, notwithstanding, too often neglected. With us in Germany, the appellations of *ein alter Mann*, an old man, *ein Greis*, a grey head, and in France, *un Viellard*, carry something venerable along with them; but this is not the case in England, where an old man and an old woman, are expressions that seem to imply something disgusting, and  
are

are almost synonymous with those of old fellow, old square-toes, or old witch; words that are more significantly and more frequently pronounced with an air of contempt, than denominations of the same kind, now and then used, in other languages. At Sparta, old age was held in great veneration; and Plutarch says: "that it was a pleasure to grow old at Lacedæmon." The contrary might be said of England, and Lyfander certainly would not have bestowed upon London that encomium, which, according to Tully, he pronounced on Sparta: "that it was the most respectable habitation of old age<sup>7</sup>." In China, by wise regulations of government, it is the same<sup>8</sup>. The fault, in England, lies, without doubt, principally in education. Fathers and mothers seem to be governed by their children as they grow up, who laugh at the old ones along with the servants. It has even the appearance with some parents, as if they really believed, that they must give way, and not contradict the younger ones, who, indeed, are generally ready enough, not only to give hints to those who are older, but even to tell them to their faces, that the

<sup>7</sup> CICERO de Senectute, cap. 18.

<sup>8</sup> RAYNAL *Histoire philosophique et politique, &c.* tom. I. p. 141.

## 420 ON THE CHARACTER

times, since their younger days, have greatly altered, and that it would better become them, not to adopt the tone of morose admonitors. It is true, that some parents will keep their children in better subordination; but it will soon lessen, when they get acquainted at school, or elsewhere, with youth educated in the manner before mentioned. They will think themselves not so well used, and with a kind of unjust indignation, will claim the privileges to which they presume to be intitled, as well as others. In England the young people, from twenty to eight and twenty, who think themselves not of the lower class, will give the ton to what is styled chearful or even brilliant company, and prescribe, what the French call *bon ton*; though the latter expect this to be done by people of thirty, when the understanding is arrived at more maturity, when experience is enlarged, and good manners are become more habitual. It may be easily accounted for, why the generality of both sexes, in that state of society wherein we live, wish to conceal as much as possible the ravages that old age commits upon the body and the constitution; but it is somewhat singular, that the anxiety about this decay, from which no mortal can be exempted, should be greater among the English than

than among other nations, particularly, when the generality of them, as I have before observed, do not seem to be afraid of dying. Yet from this aversion to the appearance of being burdened with years, every one almost wishes to be thought young, and does what is in his power to conceal wrinkles and grey hair. Females are displeased with the glass that tells them the truth, and some even seek to stifle their chagrin by the cordial dram. Among the men, numbers, without considering the absurdity, will clothe themselves in advanced years, as if they still enjoyed their youthful days; and when elderly people, with us in Germany, appear abroad, on cold wintry days, in cloaks or furs, here many are ashamed of wearing a light great coat, for fear they should betray the number of their years, or be suspected that their constitution was impaired, and that their blood did not run with youthful warmth and velocity through their veins. Colds, rheumatism, and gout, seem to be at home in England, and to be favoured by the climate; but people of a tender habit of body, or advanced in years, will rather suffer these great evils, and conceal, if possible, that they are tormented by them, than dress suitably to their years or their constitution. In the mean time, when

they appear among the younger ones in a light dress, and affecting the vivacity of former days, they are laughed at; and whilst they increase the vain pride of youth in preferring its dress and manners to a becoming attire, and the decent gravity of advanced years, they lessen the respect due to old age, which they might, undoubtedly, enjoy, to their great satisfaction, if they would adopt the proper means to obtain it. Some years ago, I met an acquaintance, an English gentleman, settled in the mercantile business at Petersburg, who came upon a visit to London. I was pleased to find that his health, which, before he went to Russia, was but very indifferent, had greatly mended; and on asking him, How the cold climate agreed with him? he answered, “ I do not much perceive the cold at Petersburg; “ but here, though it is but the month of October, I find myself always chilly. In Russia we secure ourselves against the raw season, “ by furs and a warm dress, which we find very “ comfortable and conducive to health; but “ here they laugh at me, even when I put on “ a thin great coat; and I cannot, in my turn, “ help smiling at them again, when I am upon “ the Exchange, and see how many there are “ shivering with cold, because they fear that “ appear-



“ appearing in a warmer dress, they should  
 “ look old, or impress the women with a no-  
 “ tion as if they were not of a strong constitu-  
 “ tion.” I know very well that what I have  
 said is liable to exceptions ; but, I believe, they  
 are not very numerous. A general dislike to  
 the character of old age seems to prevail, though  
 every one entertains a desire to prolong his years,  
 and those who come under that description,  
 cannot but be miserable, if, distanced by time  
 from the younger world, they are incapable of  
 indemnifying themselves by domestic and men-  
 tal pleasures, joined to a recollection of such  
 former days as have not been productive of re-  
 morse. There are instances, that some of both  
 sexes among the English, have found the load  
 of years, the tediousness of retirement, and the  
 necessity of renouncing sensual pleasures, so  
 burdensome, that they have rid themselves of  
 a displeasing existence as soon as possible.

After all these observations on the character  
 of English *men*, it might perhaps be expected  
 that I should say something upon that of the  
 other sex. I shall endeavour to be as impartial  
 as possible, and adhere, as strictly as it is in  
 my power, to the motto which I have prefixed  
 on the title-page.

The English laws are, in many respects, very

favourable to women. Nobility among them is acquired either by birth, or marriage, or royal creation. Titles and estates, when the male-line is extinct, will, sometimes, devolve to the female. Marriage places them, except in the case of the wives of bishops, in the same rank with their husbands. A lady of quality, when, after the decease of her first husband, she marries a second, inferior in rank to the former, loses, according to law, her title, but, cases of divorce excepted, custom continues it notwithstanding. If she has the title in her own right, she keeps the same, even when she marries a person of very inferior extraction, and the new husband, can lay no claim to the titles and dignities of his wife. The English law says : *Uxor fulget radiis mariti*, which assertion cannot be inverted ; and though, there are, perhaps, instances enough where it might be said, *fulget maritus radiis uxoris*, yet the satirical world will not regard such rays as signs of honour or glory. The wife is supposed to be the whole and sole property of her husband ; but there are instances, where this supposition is contradicted by facts and experience. It sometimes happens, however, that a husband sells his wife, as his property, with a rope about her neck, to another, who chooses to buy her at a small price.

I need

I need not to mention that such a sale is neither allowed, nor countenanced by law, though foreigners, even of late, have asserted it in their accounts of England.

As a married woman is looked upon as the property of her husband, it makes him answerable for her actions. According to the English law, the wife has no will of her own. It is very true that such a position is contradicted, too frequently, by daily experience, and that in England, perhaps, in eight families out of ten, the will is fallen to the lot of the wife, when the husband has left but little or none of his own: it might be, therefore, supposed, that this doctrine of the law, is one of those that are supported by faith and not by sight. Among the privileges of a married woman is this, that her husband must pay her debts, though contracted without his knowledge. As long as he is alive, the wife cannot be imprisoned, on account of debts, but her husband may. I know of instances, where widows have married men, who, before the wedding, knew nothing of the debts of their spouses, and were obliged either to pay them or to go, soon after the marriage rites were performed, to goal, to save their new help-mates from confinement. For this reason, advertisements are not unfrequently

quently seen in the newspapers, by which husbands caution the public not to trust their wives with goods or money, because they are resolved not to pay their debts ; yet it will happen, that the good-natured husband is obliged to do it, notwithstanding the public notice he has given. Another privilege is, that if a woman very soon after the wedding, should be brought to bed, the child is according to law legitimate, though the husband disclaims the title of father to it, and the public thinks him to be in the right. With us in Germany, this would be a sufficient foundation for a man to sue for a divorce ; but the English law is in favour of the woman, and declares downright, *Pater est quam nuptiæ demonstrant* ; he has married her, and, therefore, he is the father of her children. Likewise, if a husband should, for several years, be absent from his wife, and she should, a twelvemonth and upwards, after his departure, be delivered of a child, it is in the eye of the law legitimate, and if it should be the first born son, he is the legitimate heir of all the estate of which his supposed father might be possessed. In such cases, however, it is required, that the husband, during his absence, should not be out of the kingdom, but within the four seas, *inter quatuor maria*, as the law expresses

presses it. In one instance only, women seem to be rather severely used by the law, and that is in crimes of petit-treason. If a woman murders her husband, she is, according to the letter of the law, to be burnt alive; though at present, this latter part of the sentence, is not executed, as I have mentioned already, in another place<sup>9</sup>. Should, however, the ladies of the members of parliament, agree among themselves, to prevail upon their husbands to abolish this Gothic law, I have no doubt but it would soon be done.

The sex in England is praised for its beauty; and I really believe, that in no country are so many fine women to be met with as in England. It has been said, that their dress has a considerable share in this praise; and, perhaps, it may be so. The inoculation of the small-pox has, within these late years, greatly contributed to increase the number of handsome faces. The opinion of the generality of the English, that in no part of the globe such handsome women are to be met with as in that part of Great Britain called England, is rather a proof of their national pride. The Moorish princes prefer the beauties of their own country to all the women

in the world, and think, that they are no where handsomer than in Africa. The opinions about beauty, and the judgments so differently given upon it, depend much on fancy, on first impressions made on the mind in younger days, and on circumstances; which variety of opinions, in fact, is very beneficial to the state of society.

Muralt, in his *Letters on the English*<sup>10</sup>, says of the women in England, “that they made little impression upon his heart; that most of them are fair, with handsome, but inanimated faces; that among a hundred such handsome ones, not ten are entertaining or agreeable; that they want broad shoulders and hips; that all, even the old ladies, adorn themselves with patches, which might be observed behind their spectacles; that they are easily put out of humour, and addicted to laziness, leaving all the drudgery to their husbands, who very readily submit to it”. Indeed, I do not know what to think of this French writer, and I must say, that this character of the English women is unfairly drawn. When he acknowledges, that they have made but little impression upon his heart, it is certain that not their charms, but his own feelings

<sup>10</sup> *Lettres sur les Anglois et les François*; a Cologne, 1727.  
p. 13.

were in fault ; and though inanimated faces are to be seen in private companies, and in public places ; yet there are others who bespeak liveliness by their countenance, and animation by their eyes. Had our French author been more acquainted with the better educated women in England, he would have found more than ten among a hundred, both entertaining and agreeable. Patches are now out of fashion among English ladies, and, to their honour be it said, the generality of them, even at present, are not much given to rouge and painting, though there are many who are ashamed of shewing their faces as they really are. The want of broad shoulders and hips, will, I am pretty confident, not be generally regretted by English women ; nor have they any reason for it, Muralt being a native of Switzerland, he took his idea of the standard of female beauty from the women of his own country ; but had his taste been a little more refined, he would have resigned the ideas which he had formed of beauty in his earlier days, and acknowledged that no where a greater number of fine shapes, among women, are to be found than in England. He is, perhaps, more in the right when he asserts, that they are easily put out of humour : but this is a weakness, not particular to Eng-

English women ; it is the nature of those in all countries. A celebrated modern British writer<sup>1</sup>, comparing the manners of handsome English, French, and German women, says of the former, that “ even among the loveliest features, something of a sulky air often appears.” This is a very just remark, though, perhaps, in five instances out of ten, this sulkiness will soon change into a good-natured smile, when the parties get a little better acquainted. The charge of laziness, which our French author brings against the English women, cannot be admitted without great limitations. The Mohammedan women, I believe, outdo all the rest of their sex in idleness ; and, though in England, those who think they have money enough, without the necessity of any useful labour, will resemble them ; yet there are many good wives and mothers to be found, who manage their domestic affairs with great care and application ; and who bring their families up in such an exemplary manner, as is well worthy of imitation. Laziness appears no where more, and to a higher degree among the females, than in London ; yet, even there are very many exceptions to be found.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Moore, in his *View of Society and Manners in France, &c.* vol. ii. p. 22.



In no country is more attention and regard paid to women, particularly the younger ones, than in England, and no where they are oftener, among men, the topic of conversation. It is a proverb, that England is the paradise of women ; and I really think that there is no country where their situation is more advantageous. All the civility and deference shewn to them, by men, they look upon as an homage due to them ; all encomiums bestowed on them, on account of beauty and accomplishments, they are very apt to take as literally true ; though many ordinary faces are to be met with, and though the praise of accomplishments is frequently offered by flattery, without any foundation. It is said that in France the women give the ton in all things, and have the sway ; but I am convinced, that in England their power is still greater, though they obtain it in a very different manner from those of France. The government of the house is generally left to the wife, by the husband, who readily submits to her administration ; deference to the sex being inculcated into his mind from his infancy, both by his mother and even his father, who, in nine cases out of ten, has set the example, finding that by these means, it was most easy to preserve domestic peace.

Many

Many enchanting descriptions of female love and of ardent attachment to their lovers, are given in numberless English romances; but it is said, notwithstanding, that true love is not so well known, nor so frequently to be met with, among the fair ones of this island, as might be supposed from such romantic representations. I neither can, nor will, decide any thing in regard to this assertion, though I have often heard it made. This, I believe to be true, that originals of those heroines, drawn by a Richardson and others, under the guidance of a warm imagination, are as scarce in England as in any other country; and more so among the modern ladies of fortune and quality, and those who are inhabitants of London. I also think, that what may be called condescending, pleasing, engaging, fascinating manners, together with those little attentions, called by the French *petites soins*, so powerful in their effect, are things not much to be expected by English husbands of their wives, at least the instances of the kind are not very frequent. This want, however, in order to render the married state happy, is not confined to England; it is more or less visible in all countries; and, in justice to English women, I will say, that the generality of them make excellent mothers;

mothers; that most of them are very fond of cleanliness; that many of them are domestic, and mind the affairs of their houses, and the concerns of their families; that they have not that stiffness and affectation about them, which is too often to be seen in women of other countries, particularly the northern; they are more natural, and consequently more pleasing. Yet, such is the contradiction and inconsistency in the human character, that it is to be wondered at, that notwithstanding English women are in general very compassionate and tender-hearted, they should be so numerous and frequent at public executions, and have the appearance, as if they were fond of seeing a fellow-creature in the agonies of an unnatural death. It will excite, perhaps, surprize, when I mention, that during the trial of the Frenchman, de la Motte, who, not many years ago, was executed as a spy or traitor, numbers of ladies in London, some of the first rank in the city, were then sitting at the Old Bailey, as composedly as if they had been at a playhouse, and even in those awful moments, when the jury were consulting, Whether they should find the prisoner guilty or not, stared the unfortunate man as unconcernedly in the face, and took refreshments with as much indifference, as if they, the play being

VOL. I                      F f                      finished,

#### 434 ON THE CHARACTER

finished, were only waiting for the entertainment. However, this is of very little significance, when compared to what the Roman ladies did, when they were present at the most cruel murders, committed before thousands of spectators in their amphitheatres. These ladies had their slaves sometimes fixed on the cross without their having committed any thing; they had them frequently, and most severely whipped in their presence, for the sake of amusement, or being capricious, and in an ill humour<sup>a</sup>; a thing, as I have been informed, practised sometimes even now, in the same way, in the West Indies. I believe that English women, with very few exceptions, would not be capable of such acts, but the French have given in our days proofs that they are. A friend of mine, who, some years ago, returned from France, assured me, that he was witness to the following fact: at Orleans, where he made some stay, a criminal was broken upon the wheel, in the market place. The wretch lived, after the executioner had done his business, till the evening. Neither his groans, nor the horrid spectacle he offered, prevented

<sup>a</sup> O demens, ita servus homo est? nil fecerit, esto.

Hoc volo, sic jubeo, sit pro ratione voluntas.

Juv. Sat. vi. ver. 221.

ladies

ladies and gentlemen from taking their usual evening promenade on the market place; and when he, dying, begged very hard for a little water to quench his excessive thirst, a lady, who passed, and heard him, said indignantly: "*Taisez vous, coquin!*" hold your tongue, scoundrel! Mercier<sup>3</sup> relates, that some years ago, when a young man, who had killed his father, and shewed himself extremely hardened on the place of execution, received the first stroke on the scaffold, which breaking and smashing his legs, made him give a shriek, all the spectators, among whom was a great number of women, clapped their hands, and loudly encouraged the executioner. I am really of opinion, that English women could never be guilty of such conduct, or shew themselves so destitute of compassionate feelings.

Most of those who have written on this subject, of the female sex in England, talk too generally. Their observations are commonly taken from persons in genteel life, or of rank, and from the inhabitants of London. But certainly a distinction should be made between the higher classes and the lower; between those who live in great cities, and those who pass

<sup>3</sup> *Tableau de Paris*, tom. iii p. 252.

## 436. ON THE CHARACTER

their days in the country. The latter, who constitute the greatest number, have undoubtedly, in a hundred instances, the preference, in regard to moral character, above the former. They are more modest, more domestic, more industrious; they are cleanly in their persons and their houses, and even in cottages, which is not so much the case in large cities, and particularly in London. The generality of those who are styled persons of quality, or who think themselves opulent, lead an idle life, useless, and tiresome even to themselves; they are, in the present age, so little domestic, that they find it very disagreeable to stay at home; they hasten from one engagement to another, from company to company, and from card-table to card-table. Some French and German writers have asserted, that they are very fond of talking politics; but I have the best reason to think that this is not generally true. The news of the neighbourhood, the latest advices from the scandalous chronicle, accounts of new fashions and new plays, constitute, in most instances, the topics of their conversation, particularly at the tea-table. A modern French author complains, that they look always grave and melancholy, when seen in company, in church, or in the streets, and at public places; and that they  
never

never look, much less stare, at any man, their eyes being always downcast. I suspect this French traveller to have been very short-sighted, or else he could never have advanced such an assertion. There are, indeed, most amiable modesty, and downcast looks of innocence, often to be met with, even in London; but whoever has frequented the playhouses, and observed the attention and smiles visible on the countenances of many ladies, when very expressive *double entendres* enliven the stage and the audience, or when they, with piercing glasses and eyes, examine the company present, will hardly think that they are so grave and so melancholy as is pretended. Even in churches their eyes, the very old ones excepted, are not filled with mere devotion; and they will sometimes cast a friendly glance upon other objects around them. It is also frequently observed, and even mentioned in public papers, that courts of judicature, when criminal cases are tried, where female virtue and modesty must be put to the blush, have been crowded by those, who, as it was supposed, would wish to be absent from motives of modesty and prudence; nay, even when the judges have cautioned and intreated them to retire, they have rather remained immoveable, and thought the covering their faces with a fan

## 438 ON THE CHARACTER

or a handkerchief, sufficient to declare their pudicity, and to hide tittering and laughter.

In boarding-schools, where the daughters of those are educated who can afford the expence, they frequently corrupt each other. A certain affected vivacity, liveliness, a smartness, and false wit, sometimes bordering upon pertness, a vanity in dress and fashions, are at present the principal ingredients of an education given to young ladies, whose parents think themselves not of the lowest class of people. Romances, which in London spring up weekly, like mushrooms, are too often their principal reading; by which means, perhaps, in six instances out of ten, both the head and the heart are corrupted. Most young girls, particularly in London, when they are twelve years old, are well informed of those things which they would know early enough at the age of nineteen or twenty. What Horace says of the young females at Rome, fits exactly those in England: "they 'think on love from their tenderest years';" and, indeed, where is there a country where they do not!

§ ——— Amores

*De tenero meditatur ungui.*

*HOR. Od. vi. lib. iii. v. 24.*

Dress



Dress is carried to the very utmost, and the changes it undergoes are more frequent than those of the moon: all is governed by novelty, and taste is entirely out of the question, if it be but the fashion. Neither caricatures exhibited at the windows of printshops, nor satirical paragraphs in newspapers, against ridiculous fashions, prove of any effect. The former are stared and laughed at, on passing them in the streets, and the others produce merely some merriment for those who read the papers, without effecting the least reformation in them whom they particularly concern. This rage for finery and fashion spreads from the highest to the lowest; and in public places, where numbers appear elegantly dressed, it is very difficult to guess at their rank in society, or at the heaviness of their purse. The tradesman's daughter, whose father can hardly earn the necessary expences of life, will do all that is in her power to dress when she goes abroad, as if she were in easy circumstances; and many, who might by their outside appearance be taken for such as are in affluence, will be found, upon enquiry, in a state of very precarious dependence, or even of servitude.

All, however, that I have said on this subject is not peculiar to English women, who have  
 . not,

not changed the nature of their sex. What Homer says of the fair in his time, is in many instances still applicable to those of our days. Virgil contends, that nothing is so changeable and fickle as a woman; and I have met with people who think that even now there is some truth in this assertion. Juvenal inveighs against the head-dress<sup>6</sup> of the Roman ladies in his time, as being against all taste and cleanliness, and laughs at the high heels to raise pigmies<sup>7</sup>, which were then perhaps more in use than now.

Notwithstanding all such strictures, passed upon the fair sex, by ancient and modern writers, it will always remain true, that they are adorned with many pleasing qualities, and that their foibles arise too often from an education and from refinements, which are inconsistent with nature. The late lord Chesterfield is acknowledged to have been well skilled in the human heart, and in the manners of mankind; but, I think, he is rather too severe, in the cha-

<sup>6</sup> Tanta est quærendi cura decoris

Tot premit ordinibus, tot adhuc compagibus altum  
Ædificat caput, Andromachen a fronte videbis, etc.

Juv. Sat. vi. v. 500, seq.

<sup>7</sup> ——— Adjuta cothurnis

Et levis erecta confurgit ad oscula planta.

Ibid. v. 505.

rafter which he has drawn of women, when he says: "They are only children of a larger growth; they have an entertaining tattle, and sometimes wit; but for solid reasoning, good sense, I never in my life knew one that had it, or who reasoned or acted consequentially for four and twenty hours together. Some little passion or humour always breaks in upon their best resolutions. Their beauty neglected or controverted, their age increased, or their supposed understanding depreciated, instantly kindles their little passions, and overturns any system of consequential conduct, that in their most reasonable moments they might have been capable of forming.—No flattery is either too high or too low for them. They will greedily swallow the highest and gratefully accept of the lowest, and you may safely flatter any woman from her understanding, down to the exquisite taste of her fan." I repeat, that I think his lordship judged rather too severely; and exceptions, I believe, might be found.

The fame of English women, for modesty and virtue, is of long standing, and though it has been, perhaps, in some instances, tarnished and lost in its credit in these modern times, yet what the rev. Mr. Madan has advanced on

this point, in his book written in favour of polygamy, seems to be liable to great limitation. "Most certain it is," he says, "that  
 " the crime of adultery daily increases amongst  
 " us, infomuch that one would think many of  
 " the *British ladies*, once famed for their modesty, chastity, and sobriety, either never  
 " read their Bibles at all, or else only that edition of it, which was printed by the company  
 " of stationers, in the reign of Charles the First,  
 " (and for which archbishop Laud fined them  
 " severely in the Star-chamber), wherein they  
 " printed the seventh commandment without  
 " the word *not*, so that it stood, *Thou shalt commit adultery* 7." Far be it from me to examine such assertions; I leave it to those, who advance opinions of this kind to defend themselves. I am rather inclined to side with those who think more favourably.

7 *Thelyphthora*, vol. i. p. 68.

# E R R A T A.

Vol. I. page 100, l. 2, from bottom, for *depenses*, r. *dépens*:

l. 3, for a, r. à.

l. 4, for qui, r. *que*.

353, l. 3, from bottom, for chose, r. *chose*:

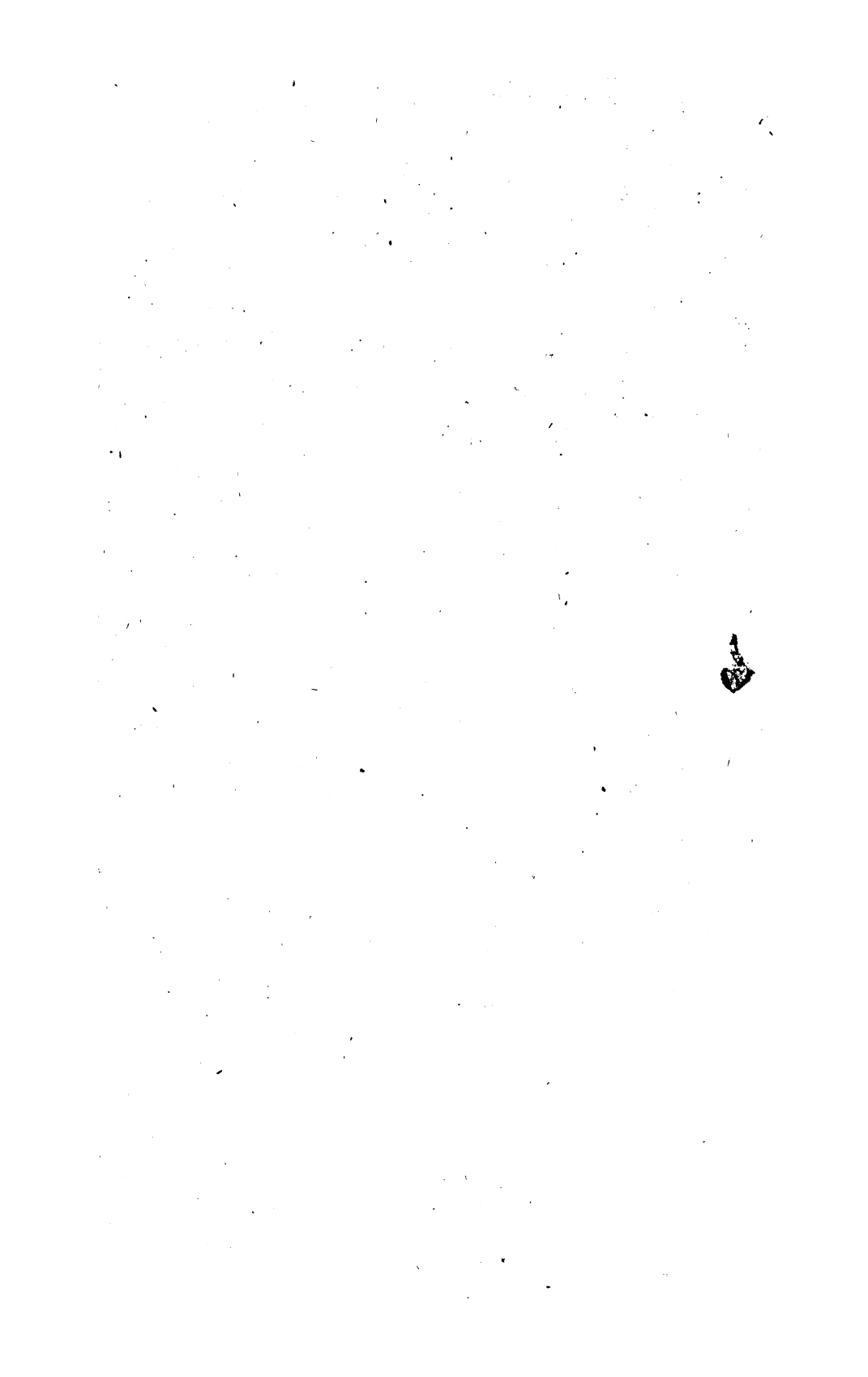
426, l. 16, for quam, r. *quem*.













63

